

Library of
ST. JOHN'S SEMINARY



BRIGHTON, MASSACHUSETTS

ST. LOUIS CATHOLIC HISTORICAL REVIEW

Issued Quarterly

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

REV. CHARLES L. SOUVAY, C. M., D. D.

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

REV. F. G. HOLWECK

REV. GILBERT J. GARRAGHAN, S. J.

REV. JOHN ROTHENSTEINER

EDWARD BROWN

Volume 1

APRIL 1919

Number 3

PUBLISHED BY THE CATHOLIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SAINT LOUIS

209 WALNUT STREET, ST. LOUIS, MO.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
CATHOLIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF ST. LOUIS.....	130
MISSOURI'S EARLIEST SETTLEMENT AND ITS NAME <i>Rev. Lawrence Kenny, S.J.</i>	151
FATHER CHARLES NERINCKX AND HIS RELATIONS TO THE DIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS <i>Rev. John Rothensteiner</i>	157
AN APPEAL	176
NOTES	177
DOCUMENTS FROM OUR ARCHIVES	184

Catholic Historical Society of St. Louis

Established February 7th, 1917

OFFICERS AND STANDING COMMITTEES 1918-1919

President—MOST REV. JOHN J. GLENNON, D. D.
First Vice-President—RT. REV. MGR. J. A. CONNOLLY, V. G.
Second Vice-President—EDWARD BROWN
Third Vice-President—LOUISE M. GARESCHE
Secretary—REV. JOHN ROTHENSTEINER
Assistant Secretary—MARY CONSTANCE SMITH
Treasurer—RT. REV. MGR. J. J. TANNRATH, Chancellor

*Librarians
and Archivists* { REV. F. G. HOLWECK
REV. CHARLES L. SOUVAY, C. M., D. D.
REV. GILBERT J. GARRAGHAN, S. J.

*Executive
Committee* { RT. REV. MGR. J. A. CONNOLLY, V. G., President
RT. REV. MGR. J. J. TANNRATH, Chancellor
RT. REV. MGR. P. W. TALLON
REV. CHARLES L. SOUVAY, C. M., D. D.
REV. F. G. HOLWECK
REV. MARTIN L. BRENNAN, Sc D.
REV. JOHN ROTHENSTEINER
EDWARD BROWN, Secretary

*Committee
on Membership* { RT. REV. MGR. P. W. TALLON
RT. REV. MGR. J. J. TANNRATH, Chancellor

*Committee
on Library
and Publications* { REV. CHARLES L. SOUVAY, C. M., D. D.
REV. F. G. HOLWECK
REV. GILBERT J. GARRAGHAN, S. J.
REV. JOHN ROTHENSTEINER
EDWARD BROWN

COMMUNICATIONS

General Correspondence should be addressed to Rev. John Rothensteiner, Secretary, 1911 N. Taylor Ave., St. Louis, Mo.

Exchange publications and matter submitted for publication in the ST. LOUIS CATHOLIC HISTORICAL REVIEW should be sent to the Editor-in-chief, Rev. Charles L. Souvay, C.M., DD., Kenrick Seminary, Webster Groves, Mo.

Remittances should be made to Rt. Rev. J. J. Tannrath, Treasurer, 209 Walnut St., St. Louis, Mo.

MISSOURI'S EARLIEST SETTLEMENT AND ITS NAME

History does not seem to start right unless it begins at the beginning. This may explain why in the older states an apparently undue importance is attached to the location of their first towns. Not only the capital city and the metropolis but the site of the earliest settlement must be known by all who would not be ignorant of the ABC of their civic history.

Missouri has been unfortunate from this point of view, for her historians have been unable to say with decision where it was that the Frenchmen, who two centuries ago came trickling down the Wabash, the Illinois, and the Wisconsin to the Mississippi, planted their first homes on the Missouri side of that great waterway. *Sieur de Bourgmont's Fort Orleans*, built in 1724 on an island in the Missouri, near the present Brunswick in Chariton County, is sometimes given the distinction of priority. *Sainte Geneviève*, the oldest of existing settlements, has a clearer title; but much history was enacted here before its foundation. The miners, who made their homes about the "*Cabanage de Renaudière*" formed a village, of course of very modest proportions, before *Ste. Geneviève* arose above the mists that surround its origin.

There is another claimant. Mr. Houck states its case with his usual judicial fairness. "Although we have no direct evidence of the fact, it is highly probable," he says, "that the first white settlement on the Mississippi, even before the foundation of Cahokia and Kaskaskia, was made on the west side of the Mississippi near the mouth of the river *Des Pères*." He had heard the testimony of but two witnesses. The first of these was Beck, who in his *Gazetteer of Missouri* speaks of a town founded by the early Jesuit Fathers (the French called them *Pères*) at the mouth of the *Des Pères River*, from whose presence the river derived its name. The other witness was *Moses Austin*.

Austin was a keen observer of men and things. Among his papers carefully preserved by his descendants in Austin, Texas, is a booklet of 38 leaves, which he entitles a Memorandum of his journey from Virginia to Louisiana West of the Mississippi, 1796-7. Pertinent to our subject is the statement:

"From the best Accounts that can be gathered from the most antient of the Inhabitants it appears that the first Settlement of the Country by the French was a place called *La Rivière Despère* (or Fathers or Priests River) which is situated on the now Spanish side of the Mississippi about six miles below

where the Town of St. Louis now stands. . . . From the supposed unhealthiness of that spot, they removed to a prairie on the Kaskaskia River about 25 miles from its mouth where the Tamaroica Indians then lived. Here they built a church dedicated to St. Joseph, and called the prairie after the name of the Saint, and resided there sometime, until some disorder prevailing among the Indians, which destroyed (*sic*) most of them in one year, they came to Kaskaskia and built a Stone Church in the Centre of the town dedicated to the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary."

The St. Joseph's church, at what has long been known as Prairie Du Rocher, as well as Kaskaskia, in the Illinois Bottoms are conspicuous facts in the story of the white occupation of the Mississippi Valley, but they do not interest us at present. We shall not follow our Missouri colony in its migration thither. Neither shall we claim, as Mr. Houck was inclined to do, that the settlement at the mouth of the Des Peres antedated Cahokia over in Illinois. For, in truth, it does not. These considerations would carry us far afield. It will be sufficient for this brief paper to bring the Missouri settlement out of the region of the conjectural and establish as a certainty that there was a town at the mouth of the Des Peres River in 1706, that is, twenty years prior to any other known foundation in Missouri.

There are witnesses whose testimony has not been heard. Let us cite them. Father James Gravier's recital of the events of his trip from Chicago to the mouth of the Mississippi in 1700 is a classic document in western annals. It will be recalled that when, midway down the course of the Illinois River, he reached the camp of the confederated Illinois tribes, he found that the Kaskaskia Indians and the French, who were there, had determined to secede from their allies and remove to the south. He accompanied them in their withdrawal until his companion, Father Gabriel Marest, fell sick, when he hastened on with him to the Tamaroa Village, a mission station on the site of the present Cahokia, opposite St. Louis. Father Gravier left his brother Jesuit in good hands at Tamaroa, and continued his journey southward towards the mouth of the Mississippi as he had contemplated. He tells us no more of the movements of the Kaskaskia Indians or of the French, who had left the confederated camp. The inference, hitherto followed almost universally by writers touching on this period, was that these continued their journey until they established themselves near the mouth of the Kaskaskia River and founded there the village of Kaskaskia, Illinois, in the year 1700.

Such was not the case. When they reached the mouth of the Des Peres River, they chose a beautiful spot for their home there, as we are informed by indisputable contemporary evidence. In the following year, that is, 1701, the Reverend Mr. Bergier, who was pastor at that time in the Tamaroa village, writes to the Bishop of Quebec:

"I. The Kats [this is a common short form for Kaskaskia] to the extent of about thirty cabins, have established their new village two leagues below this on the other side of the Mississippi. They have built a fort there, and nearly all the French have hastened thither."

"Two leagues below" Tamaroa, and "on the other side of the Mississippi" bring us into Missouri at the mouth of the Des Peres River. "They have built a fort there" and "nearly all the French have hastened thither," indicate a settlement of whites. A number of Frenchmen left the confederated camp with the Kaskaskia. We see these now augmented by the accession of Frenchmen who had been at Tamaroa, so that it is safe to say that the whites in Missouri in 1700 were the largest aggregation of Caucasians at any one spot in the entire Mississippi Valley.

Monsignor Bergier continues:

"2. The chief of the Tamaroa, followed by some cabins, joined the Kats, attracted by Rouensa who promises them much, and makes them believe him saying that he is called by the great chief of the French, Mr. d'Iberville, as Father Marest has told him."

"3. The remainder of the Tamaroa numbering about twenty cabins are shortly going to join their chief, already settled at the Kats. So there will remain here only the Cahokia numbering 60 or 70 cabins. They are cutting stakes to built a fort."

Here we learn how it came about that the early Illinois settlement changed its name at this time from Tamaroa to Cahokia. The Tamaroa abandoned the site and the Cahokia made it their permanent home.

Attention might incidentally be called to the meaning of the word "cabin" as used in this letter and contemporary Illinois literature. The cabins of these tribes ordinarily contained five fires, and each fire accommodated two families. Allowing four persons to an average family, we have $(30 \times 5 \times 2 \times 4)$ twelve hundred Kaskaskia Indians constituting one element of the population of Missouri's first city. As a matter of fact, this is about the correct figure. For at a very slightly later date, Father Gravier states that the total number of this band of the Kaskaskia was 1200. An evident mistranslation in the Jesuit Relations of this statement, where in the English it is given at 2200, originated an error that is appearing in all the more recent accounts touching this point. If the Tamaroa followed their chief, as they were about to do, this would add another 1200 to Missouri's population. The whites may have numbered a hundred, making thus a grand total of 2,500 souls. This is a very moderate estimate of the whites. They may have been many more. We read that at an earlier date than this 1,000 French traders and trappers, not counting the Indians, gathered at times at Michilimacinac. There were surely never that many at the mouth of the Des Peres, but there may well have been far more than a hundred.

Though there can no longer be any reasonable doubt about the location of Missouri's first colony, it may be well to confirm the established fact. This may be done by summoning another witness who may bring us very valuable testimony.

The cartography of the younger DeLisle of Paris was just at our period one of the glories of French scholarship. In 1703 he executed

a map of the course of the Mississippi. The village of Tamaroa is correctly located; and, across the river very slightly to the south, we find he has placed a village of the Illinois or the Kaskoukia. He is so precise that he shows the Des Peres, and the settlement is on its northern bank. Hence the first city was within the limits of St. Louis of today.

Is further testimony desired? Father Gravier in the trip just referred to, from Chicago to the mouth of the Mississippi, actually shows us the city in the process of crystallizing into formation. He says the Tamaroa are not at their camp, but two leagues south of it. Then he adds, the Mitchigamea are coming to form one village with them there. This clearly indicates that some of the Tamaroa had already made up their minds to abandon their old home at the present Cahokia for a site two leagues below.

Finally, there is another witness. According to the hitherto accepted view, the Kaskaskia tribe never lived right on the Mississippi, but on the Illinois River up to 1700 and on the Kaskaskia River after that date. Now there is a letter of Fr. Gabriel Marest in the Jesuit Relations, written while he was with the Kaskaskia tribe. Its superscription is "From the Illinois ON THE MISSISSIPPI," Nov. 26th, 1702.

The mention of Rouensa's name in Monsignor Bergier's letter opens a possible amplification of the personnel of our village. This chief, Rouensa, is spoken of with comparative frequency in the documents of the period. It would seem possible to substantiate, by observing his movements, Austin's account of the migrations of the colony that constituted Missouri's first settlement. But an investigation of the name of the Missouri city would seem to be more appropriate at this juncture.

Let us see whether by following Rouensa's various abodes some clue may be found as to the name of the city at the mouth of the Des Peres. If the tribe remained in Missouri five years, it is certain that the name was St. Francis Xavier.

For on March 2nd, 1706, Father John Mermet wrote a letter which he dates "From among the Kaskaskia" and addresses it to his brethren in Canada, whom he takes to be well aware of the fact that Rouensa's village is named St. Francis Xavier. The opening lines indicate that the unsteady tribe is just then on the eve of an exodus, but whither or whence is not mentioned. The chief purpose of the letter, however, is to tell of a murderous attack made by one of the Peoria savages on Father James Gravier, and of the successful efforts made to bring rescue to the wounded and captive priest. Mermet enlisted the assistance, he tells us, of Rouensa, who sent four of his braves to the Peoria camp at once. These with the help of a French blacksmith, named St. Michael, and other Christians there, secured the priest and brought him safely to Father Mermet, who was patiently and hopefully waiting, the letter states, "at Rouensa's village, which as you know is named St. Francis Xavier."

Unfortunately it is not certain that Rouensa was living in Missouri when this letter was written. It is possible that at least some of the first Missouri colonists, whites as well as Indians, had already passed over into the Illinois prairies; but the name of the prairie where they took up their abode was St. Joseph's. Every little Mission post in Illinois has a well known name. St. Francis Xavier is not there. By conclusion, we are compelled to locate St. Francis Xavier in Missouri. There are other arguments that point to this conclusion, none however forcing conviction. There is an appropriateness, too, in finding St. Francis Xavier at the very portals of the structure of the history of the great commonwealth of Missouri. Xavier was a Spaniard, worthy of a place in that brightest constellation of Christian geniuses which constituted the golden age of their country: Columbus and Magellan, Cervantes and Calderon, Ximenes and Loyola, Murillo and Velasques, Isabella and Theresa of Jesus. Three flags in peaceful succession guarded the founding, the rise, and the permanence of Missouri, those of Spain, France and America. Her capital city will forever keep alive the memory of Jefferson the champion of American democracy; her metropolis, of St. Louis, the highest exemplar of France's chivalry; and it is fitting that her oldest settlement perpetuate the name of Xavier, Spain's great conquistador of souls.

* * *

A keen student of the history of Missouri, whose opinions on any matter in this field must receive the highest respect (Judge Walter B. Douglas), learning the contention of this article, calls attention to the fact that although the town at the mouth of the Des Peres may have been founded about Dec. 3rd, 1700, yet there is at least an apparent mention in Penicaut's Journal of an establishment of the French at the Saline in Missouri just half a year earlier. At first reading this seems to be the case, but a more careful inspection of the text of Penicaut makes it clear beyond doubt that the settlement at the Saline was made many years subsequent to that at the Des Peres.

Penicaut's Relation tells his experiences in America year by year, so that the reader may easily be misled into believing that it was written just when the events happened. It was not so written, as is clear for instance in the first chapter (1699) where he states that the French call a certain little river Orleans, because New Orleans was built not far away from the stream. New Orleans, of course, was not built in 1699, but a score of years later. Similarly when in 1700 Penicaut is ascending the Mississippi and passing the Saline, he says, "There is *at present* an establishment of the French in this place," he means that the establishment is there when he is writing his book, not that it was there when he passed the spot twenty some years earlier.

An incident that had just occurred makes this view indisputable. Some leagues lower down the river, Penicaut and his companions found that they had exhausted all their provisions and they grew too weak to row any further. They were in danger of starvation when

the Reverend Mr. Bouteville, coming down the river on his way to see Mr. d'Iberville, the new governor, encountered them, gave them his provisions, and returned up stream to secure more ample supplies for so many famishing persons. If there had been at this time a settlement of the French at the Saline, it would not have taken long to bring succor to the needy party. But as things were, Mr. Bouteville had to go all the way to Tamaroa, and it was twenty-two days before help reached Penicaut and his fellow travellers. "He departed," says Penicaut, "on the instant, and promised us that he would travel day and night to reach the Illinois as quickly as he possibly could, whence he would send us provisions. He was true to his word and no sooner had he reached his destination that he sent us a boat laden with all sorts of victuals which arrived in the hour of our sorest need at the end of twenty-two days." The supposed French settlement at the Saline was less than half way to the Tamaroa. It is incredible that Bouteville could have passed by a settlement without asking help for men in such need.

LAURENCE KENNY, S.J.

St. Louis University.



FATHER CHARLES NERINCKX

and His Relations to the Diocese of St. Louis

Rev. John Rothensteiner

The Reverend Charles Nerinckx is a very prominent and well-known figure in the early annals of the Western Church. His works and words have been recorded by some of our most distinguished writers, Archbishop Martin Spalding of Baltimore,¹ Bishop Maes of Covington,² Father De Smet, the great apostle of the Indians,³ and more recently by the Rev. W. J. Howlett⁴ and Anna C. Minogue.⁵ Being next to Father Stephen Theodore Badin, the earliest priest to foster and spread the faith in the wilderness of Kentucky, and furthermore being the founder of the illustrious Society of the Loretines, properly styled "The Friends of Mary at the Foot of the Cross," Father Charles Nerinckx deserves a memorable page in our Record of the Church's early struggles and triumphs in the Mississippi Valley.

It is not my purpose, however, to give a sketch of the lifework of Father Nerinckx, or to present a study of the noble character of "Kentucky's greatest apostle," as Bishop Maes justly calls him. This has been done, more or less satisfactorily, by the writers I have already mentioned. I would endeavor, by the help of some unpublished letters of Father Nerinckx to Bishop Du Bourg and Bishop Rosati, to throw additional light on the relations existing between the founder and superior of the Loretine Sisterhood and the Diocese of St. Louis.

Charles Nerinckx was born on October 2, 1761, in the village of Herffeling in Brabant. He was the oldest of a family of seven brothers and seven sisters, the majority of whom had the happiness of becoming priests or religious. After a regular college course, the

¹ Spalding, *Sketches of Kentucky*, Louisville 1844.

² Maes, *Life of Rev. Charles Nerinckx*. Cincinnati, Robert Clarke & Co. 1880.

³ De Smet, *Western Missions and Missionaries*. New York, James B. Kirker. 1863.

⁴ Howlett, *Life of Rev. Charles Nerinckx*. Techny, Ill. 1915.

⁵ Anna C. Minogue, *Loretto, Annals of the Century*. New York. 1912. The correct title of the Loretines is "The Friends of Mary at the Foot of the Cross."

youthful Charles entered the Seminary at Mechlin⁶ to prepare himself for the priesthood and was there ordained on November 4, 1785. During his stay of eight years at Mechlin, the zealous priest had every opportunity of studying the undercurrents of life among the rich and the poor, the pride and covetousness of the one, the human frailty and contempt of authority of the other class. What wonder, then, that Father Nerinckx, like so many other priests of that revolutionary time, became a stern and uncompromising advocate of justice and right, to such a degree, as to incur the charge of Jansenism.⁷

The invasion of the Netherlands by the French revolutionary armies under Dumourier and Pichegru in 1793 changed the entire course of Father Nerinckx's life. Being condemned to death by the revolutionary tribunal he was obliged to hide and eventually to turn his eyes toward the struggling Church of America. "On the 2nd day of July 1804," he writes, "having left my parents and friends in ignorance of my departure, I started from the Hospital of Dendermonde, where I have remained concealed from the world." His destination was America. He arrived at Baltimore on the 14th day of November, 1804, and on the Feast of Pentecost, June 2, 1805, he left Georgetown for Baltimore, and thence travelled with a company of Trappists⁸ to his appointed missionary field. On the 2nd day of July, 1805, he arrived at St. Stephens, the home of Father Badin, who, at that time, was the only priest in all the wide territory of Kentucky.

We cannot enter, however briefly, on the missionary labors of Father Nerinckx in Kentucky; suffice it to say that many of the best Catholic families of the West owe the gift of faith to his piety and zeal. But great things seemed to be in store for the good Father.

In 1808, Pope Pius VII wished to appoint Father Nerinckx Administrator Apostolic of Louisiana, Upper and Lower, and the good Father would undoubtedly have become bishop of that vast diocese including St. Louis as well as New Orleans, if his humility and distrust of himself had not prevented the promotion. What Father Nerinckx desired was an appointment as missionary in Upper Louisiana, where the Church seemed even poorer and more in need of priests, than it was in Kentucky, and where he hoped to realize his lifelong dream, the conversion of the Indians. Bishop Carroll

⁶ Mechlin, in French called Malines, one of the chief cities of Belgium, which at that time, however, was united with Holland under the title of the United Netherlands.

⁷ Of course no one could suspect Fr. Nerinckx of the *heresy* of Jansenism. His great regard for the Jesuits would of itself prove the contrary: the *spirit* of Jansenism is meant, which manifested itself in the ultra-rigorous requirements for the reception of the sacraments. Many good and holy priests and bishops of our early days seem to have had a tinge of this spirit.

⁸ In 1805 a band of Trappists under the leadership of Father Urban Guillet, as Abbot, and Father Marie Joseph Dunand started from Conewago, Penna., for Kentucky, remaining at Pottingers Creek for three years. Then they went farther west and, after a short stay at Florissant they settled on what is even now called "Monk's Mound" in Illinois.

of Baltimore at that time held jurisdiction over all Louisiana, and so could have given Father Nerinckx the desired faculties and instructions for the missions near St. Louis, of which he writes in his petition in 1809:

“1) There are two villages, St. Louis and St. Charles, about twenty miles from each other, which have a population of about 200 families, and are 50 miles from the nearest priest.

2) There is a Congregation called Tucker’s Settlement of about 60 families, seventy miles away from the former place (St. Louis), and another place called Fenwick, having twenty families and thirty miles away from Tucker’s.

3) Many heathen Indians live in the vicinity, and it is asserted that my labors among them would not be without fruits.

4) This extensive field is never visited by a priest.⁹

5) There are but two priests in the entire region. One is Rev. Mr. Olivier, a very pious man, but old and totally ignorant of English. The other priest, Rev. Mr. Maxwell is sufficiently known. He resides seventy miles from Tucker’s settlement” (at New Bourbon).

This request of Father Nerinckx seemed just and proper: yet it was not granted, as Bishop Carroll did not wish to embarrass the newly appointed Bishop of Bardstown, Benedict Joseph Flaget. Under this saintly prelate the untiring missionary was yet to reap his most abundant harvests in the old field of Kentucky. By Bishop Flaget’s order Father Nerinckx took charge of the Parish of St. Charles on Hardin’s Creek, with a missionary field extending from Washington County to Union County, and embracing about half the State of Kentucky.

Here on Hardin’s Creek, Washington County, Kentucky, he met the great opportunity of his life, to found a religious Sisterhood, that was to furnish, under God’s Providence, many of our most successful educational institutions, the Sisters of Loretto.¹⁰ In the year 1812 Miss Mary Rhodes, a native of Maryland, asked permission of the Pastor of St. Charles to open a school for girls. Her request was readily granted. Soon two other young ladies offered their services as teachers. We will let Father Nerinckx finish the story: “The sight of three young women joined in the same work revived the old idea of a convent, and it was thoroughly talked over.¹¹ The project was laid before Rt. Rev. Benedict Joseph Flaget, and he willingly con-

⁹ During 1809 and 1810 the Trappists of Monk’s Mound occasionally visited the Parishes of St. Louis, St. Charles and St. Ferdinand. Father Nerinckx was not aware of this when he wrote his letter, as Father Urban, on leaving Kentucky, was undecided about his ultimate destination.

¹⁰ For particulars concerning the houses of the Loretines cf. Anna C. Minogue, Loretto, *Annals of the Century*.

¹¹ As early as 1805 Father Nerinckx planned a religious community of women. “I call the society ‘The Friends of Mary’ and they will be something like the Beguins in Belgium.” Father Badin took an active interest in the project by procuring the necessary material means. The Convent was under roof, when it was consumed by fire, and the idea of a sisterhood in Kentucky was reluctantly dropped, to be resumed by Father Nerinckx alone.

sented to the plan. Miss Nancy Rhodes, Mary's sister, who was afterwards the first superior, bought the small tract on which Loretto is built, for 75 dollars, and gave her negro, who was sold for \$450.00. A subscription of some hundred dollars was made up, and the Congregation was called upon to assist in building a more convenient house. In the beginning of July, 1812, the first log was cut for the new convent. Great difficulties, hardships and labors were met at every step. The nuns increased, the houses grew in number, the schools continued, yet they had nothing to depend upon but the sole providence of God and the gracious protection of the Blessed Sorrowful Mother Mary."¹²

The Society was at first governed according to the rule devised by Father Nerinckx and approved by Bishop Flaget. But Rome considered some portions of it too rigid, and made some changes, which were, of course, readily accepted by Father Nerinckx and his sisterhood. This rule, corrected and approved by Rome, still seemed rather severe to many, but, as Father Nerinckx repeatedly stated, the sisters loved its austerities and were happy under its severity. In fact, they regretted the mitigations made by Rome, whilst they loyally, as good religious, accepted them.

In the winter of 1822 Bishop Du Bourg wrote to Father Nerinckx, requesting a colony of Loretines for his diocese of St. Louis. Father Nerinckx gladly acquiesced and expressed his deep satisfaction on learning that Father Rosati, Superior of the Seminary of St. Mary at the Barrens, was willing to accept the direction of the young colony of Sisters. The first letter of Father Nerinckx in regard to the Loretines to be sent to Missouri, was written to Father Joseph Rosati, C.M., at the Barrens, and dated Loretto 15 January 1823:¹³

J. M. J.

Loretto, 15 January, 1823.

Reverende plurimumque Colende Domine.

Your favor, dated 26th of November, has been sent me by our Rt. Rev. Bishop. You express in this your great wish and desire, as also that of your Venerable Bishop, and of your pious parishioners to have a colony of our poor Loretines and we learn that your zeal has already started a dwelling for them. If this be the pleasure of Providence and if they be found useful to promote God's honor and the cause of holy religion, I have no objection to offer. True it is, that we have several calls at present. The Rt. Rev. Bishop of Cincinnati wrote for some, Rev. Mr. Abell spoke for some, Rev. Mr. Chabrat wanted some for White River and we are just now building the house of Olivet on Casey

¹² Cf. Father Nerinckx's Journal, Howlett, p. 246.

¹³ The following letters of Father Nerinckx to Bishops Rosati and Du Bourg are from the Archives of the St. Louis Historical Society and have never been published or made use of for any historical publication. They were written in English, with one exception. Father Nerinckx' English is not always idiomatic or even correct, but I have preferred to make no changes, except in certain cases where the writer's meaning would otherwise have been misunderstood. Our readers have the words just as they came from the heart and hand of the great and good man.

Creek, about 30 miles from Loretto. I presume you know we have four establishments finished: Loretto, Calvary, Gethsemani and Bethania; the number of our sisters in all is 94, but you will observe, my Dear Sir, how unaccomplished they must be, being all brought together in such a hurry. Still Providence seems to protect them and to employ them for its holy design. I am willing to let you have such as may answer your expectations as near as possible. I think nine will be necessary and sufficient to make a start, for they know how to make use of scholars to supply the wants in their offices. I will be perfectly pleased if they have your Reverence for their director. You have exactly suited my notion in building them a log-house; they should never have another one, if possible; they should respire nothing but humility and contempt of the world, or they will be undone, and I hope they will not be interrupted in any of their rules, practices or observances under which they seem to live happy and to prosper.

But how will they proceed to their destination? The means I have are very insignificant; I have no congregations nor anything for my support. I have the charge of three monasteries, I have assisted in building the new Holy Cross church and, since my return from Europe one year ago, I have been at very heavy expenses. I hope that your congregation, which seems to have it so much at heart, will furnish these means. I will provide the sisters with some utensils for their church, which I wish them to have apart from the church of the congregation, so as to separate them as much as possible from the world and its various kinds of distraction, so injurious to religious perfection, and even to the scholars, as experience has taught us. I wish we could follow the view of St. Francis de Sales, who desired all his monasteries to be built on the plan of the first one; this being found to be very commodious and suiting the different calls and labors.

Several widows have applied to have a building in our yard under the direction of a sister: I feel inclined to do it. A motherhood for the assistance of the different houses is contemplated; I know not what the issue may be. I will wait till the return of two brothers I have sent to Europe.

I have a mind to write to my Revd. Countryman, Mr. La Croix to know what success our sisters would have amongst his Indians; I believe I could find some very ready to go.¹⁴

Please to inform me of your arrangements, that I may know how to dispose of this and the other calls. Salute most cordially my dear countrymen Mr. De Neckere, La Croix. Tell them to pray for their very much persecuted countryman. I expect they know there is a "*prise de corps*" (an order of arrest), to my charge for having brought out some young men, who are all become Jesuits. We happily made our escape, but our friends have suffered and been very much vexed; request them to be prudent in writing. I believe the Government (of Holland) is encouraged by some false brethren.¹⁵

¹⁴ Father De La Croix was engaged in the missions among the Indians of Western Missouri.

¹⁵ The charge made against Father Nerinckx by the government of the Netherlands was well-founded, but not criminal and referred to the fact that he had encouraged and abetted a number of young Flemish students to avoid conscription and go with him to America as workers in the missionary field, particularly among the Indians. The young men in due time became the founders of the Missouri Province of the Society of Jesus. One of them was the renowned apostle of the Indians, Father De Smet, S.J. — The name given by Father Rosati to the new Loretine Convent at the Barrens was Bethlehem.

In expectation of your answer I remain recommended to your good prayers and holy zeal.

Totus in Corde Xti.

This address will come safe

C. Nerinckx.

Mr. C. Nerinckx.

Little Loretto near Lebanon

(Or Bardstown.)

P.S.—I intend to let the sisters have what is coming to Sr. Johanna Miles and Mechtildis Hayden. I prefer to distinguish our houses with names that have some relation to the life or the sufferings of Our Lord Jesus or His beloved Mother Mary. Your Reverence will call it as you choose. My deepest respects to your most venerated Bishop if he be home from his journey.

Father Nerinckx's bishop mentioned in this letter was Benedict Joseph Flaget. Father Rosati's bishop was Louis William Du Bourg. The log-house started by Father Rosati for the use of the Sisters was small and poor enough, and was not completed at the arrival of the community, so that they had to accept for a while the hospitality of Mrs. Hayden. The next letter is addressed to the newly appointed Coadjutor-Bishop Joseph Rosati, still residing at the Barrens as Superior of the Lazarists:

J. M. J.

Loretto 8 of April (1823)

Most Reverend Sir.

But very lately I understood, that my letter never arrived which I wrote soon after your favor was handed to me. What may have stopped my letter I cannot guess. However I feel very happy in writing another time, the more so as I would offer my congratulations and homages, the most humble and sincere, to the newly nominated bishop, whom, I trust, the Lord has chosen "ut praesit et prosit," for which our warmest prayers are sent to heaven.

Concerning the business of our Loretines: when the bishop informed me, I made no objection; for I do not doubt that they will be allowed and supported in the full exercise of their rules, which seem to draw an uncommon and real bliss and happiness upon all members and every one entrusted to their care. The bishop of Cincinnati has also requested a colony, but is not yet ready to receive it. My wish and desire is that they may contribute to spread religion, virtues and morals, particularly among the poor and suffering classes, even Indians, for whom several have offered themselves and, I believe none would refuse. All this, I think, they will do with some success, as long as they remain what they now are; for if they be diverted from their present condition, they will ere long undergo, what in Europe we have lately lamented, and what we have always seen to be the case with Institutions of most holy and wisest origin. However I feel completely quiet on this score, when I flatter myself with the hope that they will be under the immediate direction of Your Lordship. I have made a list of 11 or 12 of the most suitable for teaching, work, singing, etc., with whom I doubt not you will be pleased. The Rt. Rev. Bishop of S. Louis is hourly expected and our Bishop (Flaget) presumes that he will call for them. Our Bishop has some thoughts of accompanying them. Summa veneratione,

Your humble and obedient servant.

Chas. Nerinckx.

There is a note of anxiety in this letter as to the alterations that might possibly be made in the rules and practices of his dear Loretine Sisterhood: changes, as he believed, not for the better but for the worse. Father Neringckx may have been too fearful in the matter, yet in principle he was certainly right. There is no greater danger to the religious life, than a lax rule or a lax observance of the rule.

All preparations for the exodus were now completed, and a long and interesting letter was dispatched to Bishop Du Bourg giving brief sketches of the thirteen sisters that made up the colony of the future Bethlehem in the Diocese of St. Louis. It is dated

J. M. J.

Loretto 29 April 1823.

ILLUSTRISSIME AC REVERENDISSIME DOMINE.

I send Your Lordship the little colony of our poor Loretines; if they have not all the great talents and abilities that one could wish for, I trust that in the simplicity of their heart they are willing to offer gladly their humble services and make themselves as useful as their weakness will allow of. Here is the list of them, that are sent to make out their first establishment in your diocese, with their condition and qualities.

1. Mother Johanna, was Cecily Miles. Was also the Mother at Loretto. She is a sister, I believe, of good will and some knowledge for administration, not strong in health, somewhat low-spirited and somewhat unfriendly to her subjects. She was very well liked by several, by some not. She writes not very well; knows how to bleed. I believe she is pious and a good religious loving her vocation.
2. Sr. Eldest, next to the Mother in authority, is Sr. Barbara and was Henny Clements from Union County, Ky. A good religious, I believe, a good sacristan, instructor of novices, weaver, tailor, singer, farmer etc. Several have good voices, but not much knowledge of notes, still able to sing their usual songs.
3. Sr. Assistant; Benedicta was a Fenwick of a good family. She is the sister guardian of the school, that is head teacher, a middling good scholar, truly obedient and one of our best religious.
4. Sr. Mechtildis is one of the discreet, was daughter of the widow Hayden. She is afflicted in her head, somewhat deaf, but a patient and pious nun, not useless. The little estate of hers, consisting in 150 or 180 acres of land, with what is coming there to Mother Johanna we freely give to your young establishment of Bethlehem.
5. Sr. Rose is another discreet, her family is Elder, of this County or Nelson. She is very useful; bleeder, shoemaker, fit for any work, but rather less exact, still of no great vices.
6. Sr. Lucretia, in the world a Coomes, is the third teacher, the Catechist for first communion. I think she will do well, but is somewhat hasty, still a great lover of her vocation, a very great spinner.
7. Sr. Theresia, a Mattingly, is an excellent weaver and a good religious.
8. Sr. Regina Cloney from Baltimore, 2nd teacher, a good scholar, but somewhat hasty, professed last 21st of March. She will do well.
9. Sr. Veronica, family name Cahoe, a weaver and so forth, but slow.
10. Sr. Eulalia, a Kelly, lately from Hartford, Maryland, 4th teacher but young scholar, weaver etc., lately professed, gives good hopes.
11. Sr. Beatrice Bryan, an associate, but I think will take perpetual and final vows, an able hand for garden, farm etc. and a pious religious.

12. Sr. Clodia. She is a Vessels, a novice of good disposition and useful.
13. Isabella Holden, a postulant, yet to be formed.

These are the different degrees in the society besides the generalissima or Dear Mother, who will accompany them, but is to return.

I hope, Illustrissime ac Reverendissime Domine, that under your fatherly care and wise directions they will prove useful at all times and in all places, where you will see cause to employ them in your extensive diocese. If left to the full observance of their rules and constitutions and religious practices they will live happy and draw after them numbers into the path of religious profession; although they have nothing of brightness, talents or any outward recommendation, but rather every opposite qualification. It seems that the Suffering Jesus in His agony and the Sorrowful Mother Mary, who are the constant objects of their spiritual and temporal exertions, do bless them in a special manner. How they began, how they increased, how they exist, so many in number, helping so many needy, without any means etc. is a mystery to me. They live, they go on and have no debts. I almost feel tempted to apply to them what S. Francis of Sales says of his:

"I say that we must well keep within the enclosure of our rules and of our institute; for God did not produce it in vain nor did he spread it over so many places to have it changed. The edification which our houses daily give, testify to the intention of the Holy Ghost; for it is wonderful, how much the example of our Sisters increases in others the love of a devout life." (16. letter, b. 6.)

They are asked and called for in every direction. They are only 11 years old, they are nearly 130 in number. The established houses are: the Mother-house Loretto, Calvary, Gethsemani, Bethania, Mount Carmel, Mount Mary; Olivet will be ready in two months, White River calls for a colony, two more places have applied. The bishop of Cincinnati requests me to reserve a colony for him. We have an associate house in Flanders which was started there on my last visit, by the name of La Bonne Famille, which alarms us by its spirit of envy or heresy. It may be observed that amongst the favors I secured at Rome, all the privileges granted to Loretto (the motherhouse in Kentucky) are granted to the other houses also. There is every day a plenary indulgence granted to every one that, truly penitent, receives communion in that chapel. All benefits granted to the Order of the Seven Sorrows in Rome, s. c. their confessor is allowed every Friday, *nullo festo impediante*, to say mass and office of the 7 Sorrows, *ritu duplici*. Their vows are *simplicia, sed perpetua*. I wrote to have them solemnia, because requested to do so. Rome, I think, will not agree, unless they be *sub stricta clausura*. They placed themselves under the Rule of S. Augustine, as Rome directed. Their printed rules have a formulary of the vows, which is altered to a more simple and short one, as Rome directed. All the rest of the rules stand, though very indigest and very insufficient in the guidance to spirituality and religious perfection. Still, as it seems, that the sisterhood in its present state is flourishing and yielding fruit in a considerable degree, our Rt. Rev. Bishop and myself have thought it prudent not to trim nor touch the tree, that bore so well without it. They bring along with them the ceremonies used in their taking the habit and making profession.

I feel extremely pleased, when I heard His Lordship's resolution and determination not to meddle with their rules or religious practices. Although I do not feel friendly towards Exemptions (The Loretto Society calls for no ex-

emptions or particular privileges, that might interfere with the authority of the Ordinary in any manner; I know the evil of it), still I think, that, when the Lord starts any institute for his particular designs, he also animates it with a special spirit, not easily communicated or perceived by private persons outside of the institute, and there, I believe, *Spiritus ubi vult spirat*. After all, it will matter little, provided the good be really done, how it happened to be procured. If we are allowed to admire and enjoy the good Almighty God works by his *infirmia mundi*, it is all I do so desire. Our only and sole aim in starting the poor institute was to provide or procure a Catholic school for the females of the common and lower class and to separate them from the boys. Providence seemed to interfere; we tried to follow its motions till it became what it is now. May the Merciful God be pleased to accept of it and make use of it for His greater honor and glory.

The Rt. Rev. Mr. Rosati favored me yesterday, 3 of May, with a letter, dated March 19th, in which he says, that 4 or 5 would do to begin with. I think they would, but not to carry it on in any proper manner to be useful to your seminary. For a sisterhood, as we call the smaller establishment, calls for a superior, a cook, two teachers and one more for garden, errands etc. I would be very glad if this number would do, as shortly some more are to be sent. But I think, that to carry on all the useful branches, as weaving, spinning, tailoring, sewing, catechising, singing, gardening etc., the number I send will be more beneficial and more easily supported by their own labor, which I doubt not they will be called upon to do for the neighbors. There are amongst them 6 weavers, all of them spinners, one good tailor, one good shoemaker, all more or less good sewers, gardeners, washers, 4 teachers, two good bleeders, infirmarians, catechists etc., a good sacristan. I enclose a small extract of the Constitution, as much as may do for the present, together with their Rules; they have some advices written, the rest, not yet rightly digested, I wish to send when ready. *Summa Veneratione signo*

Your humble and obedient servant.

Charles Nerinckx.

Bleeding is the art of blood-letting; the persons practicing the art were called bleeders. Bleeding the sick for almost all ailments was very common only a short while ago. Even to-day it is used in certain diseases. Among the community of Bethlehem there were two such practioners, but they, no doubt, confined their ministrations to the members of the community. As physicians were few and far between, it was very important to have some one in the convent who knew a little of medicine and bleeding. As Father Odin writes in 1823, the woods around the Barrens were full of medicinal herbs, which the good sisters, no doubt, knew well how to prepare and prescribe for the ordinary ailments the body is subject to.

The convent of Bethlehem was now established; the sisters were happy amid their hardships, and wrote glowing accounts of their new home to the Sisters at Loretto. Father Nerinckx felt relieved and very grateful. He wrote a touching letter in good Latin, to Bishop Rosati, dated

J. M. J.

Loretto 24, Sept. 1823.

Reverende adm. Domine.

Necdum per tempus licuit gratiarum tibi persolvere debitum propter paternam curam atque sancta solitudinis officia ac beneficia eximia ac innumera, quae Lauretanis nostris quondam, jam Bethlehemitis vestris, tanto zelo praestare dignatus es. Reddat Deus Omnipotens centuplum in sinum tuum. Utinam detur ipsis, quod illarum omnino omnium votum esse intelligo, semper sub tua paterna cura et directione vivere et tandem mori. Non possum non summopere approbare formam, situm monasterioli, quod ipsis procurasti; ex omnibus est optima forma et idea quam mihi formare possum; in secessu ac beata solitudine, remota a turbis, a periculis segregata, in humilitate et simplicitate ac paupertate, in sancta conversatione et suavissimi Jesu morientis ac amare dolentis Mariae contemplatione non possunt non esse beatae. Laus Deo!

Quia tempus meum breve est et numerus mensium mearum paucus et modicus, annis sexaginta duobus completis, serio secessum meditor ut plangam paululum dolorem meum antequam vadam ad terram tenebrosam. Id diu ac saepe proposui, sed jam magis urgeor. Locus et regio in qua vitam finire vellem terra est in qua vos habitatis, locum autem inquirere deberem. Habeo reduces tres maturae aetatis et morum adolescentes seu viros celibes. Cum ipsis vellem in locum quamdam secedere. Mittam brevi ex illis unum qui in hunc finem Rev. Dominationem vestram consulat? Intentio mea esset a cura animarum exemptam vitam agere. Comites mei terram colerent, et forte trivialis scholae curam possent habere et initium aliquod ponere vitae communis sub regulari observantia: peto autem jam utrum tentare id possem cum bona vestra venia ac illustrissimi Vestri Episcopi consensu. Oro ut quam primum responsum mittere digneris,

Humillimo vestro obedientissimo servo

C. Nerinckx.

P.S. Optarem responsum habere antequam mittam unum ex viris meis; de modo quo cuncta dirigenda forent postea statuere ex consilio possumus.

TRANSLATION.

J. M. J.

Loretto, 24th September, 1823.

Very Reverend Sir:

I was prevented for some time to pay the debt of gratitude I owe you on account of your paternal care and the holy offices and many and great attentions of the pious solicitude, which you were pleased to render so zealously to our one-time Loretines, now your Bethlehemites. May the Almighty God give you a hundred fold return and may He give to them, what I understand is the wish of everyone of them, to live and then to die under your paternal care and direction. I cannot but approve most heartily of the form and the site of the little monastery which you procured for them. Above all it is according to the best form and idea I could conceive. In retirement and blessed solitude, remote from the crowd and segregated from dangers, in humility, simplicity, and poverty, in holy conversation and contemplation of the sweet suffering Jesus and the sorrowing Mary they cannot but be happy. Praise be to God!

As the time is short and my days are few, having completed my sixty-second year, I seriously think of taking leave of the world, in order to deplore my sorrows, ere I enter the shadowy land. This I have long and frequently proposed to myself, but now I am urged to it more and more. The place and region in which I would await the end of my life, is the land which you inhabit: but the exact location I would have to determine. I have with me three young or unmarried men of mature age and good morals. With them I wish to go to some retreat. I will send one of them ere long who will talk it over with your Grace. It is my intention to be without the care of souls. My companions would till the soil and, perhaps, have the care of a common school, and make some beginning of a community life, under an approved rule. I now ask you whether I might make this attempt with your kind permission and your illustrious bishop's consent.

Please send an answer as soon as possible to your most humble and obedient servant

C. Nerinckx.

P. S.—I would be glad to have an answer before I send one of my men to you; on the manner of arranging these matters we can decide when we meet.

Father Nerinckx's life was now drawing to a close, as he himself expressed it. But the storm was already brewing that was to drive him away from the scene of his long and fruitful labors. A brother priest, Father Guy Chabrat,¹⁶ the Confessor to the Loretines at Bethania Church, was the prime mover of an attempt to change that which was dearest to the heart of Father Nerinckx, the Rule of the Friends of Mary at the Foot of the Cross. Father Nerinckx resented this uncalled-for interference and strenuously resisted the attempt. The piety of Father Nerinckx was described by Father Chabrat as visionary, his government as too rigorous, the practices he prescribed as too austere. But a valiant fighter as Father Nerinckx was in the cause of righteousness and justice, he would not give scandal by continuing the quarrel, in which he saw Bishop Flaget on the side of his opponent. The desire, long repressed, of going among the Indians, or of leading the life of a hermit in the wilderness of Missouri, filled his heart to overflowing. We give his next letter, dated:

J. M. J.

Loretto 17, October 1823.

Most Revd. and Dear Sir.

Pax Xti. Dmni. vobiscum.

Our man James Van Rysselberge¹⁷ comes to your parts upon some business with the Jesuits; in the same time I send him to you, to get an answer to a

¹⁶ Father Guy Chabrat, the second Ecclesiastical Superior of the Loretines, and afterwards Coadjutor-Bishop of Bardstown, in June 1826 removed the motherhouse from Hardin's Creek to the Farm of St. Stephens, which, as Father Howlett says, was the Cradle of Catholicity in Kentucky. This is the new Convent Loretto, where Father Nerinckx in 1833 found his last resting-place. The sisters themselves, after having brought the rest of their household to the new place, set fire to the convent and chapel of Old Loretto in 1825.

¹⁷ James Van Rysselberge was one of the young men, companions of Father Nerinckx, on his journey to the West. Brother James was with Father Nerinckx when he died at St. Genevieve.

letter I have sent some time past, concerning my intentions of moving to the state of Missouri, with the purpose of retiring from the very distracting and very irregular way of living which I have followed for these many years. My days are shortening fast and I see no means of preparing for the last hour. I would be glad to find some place of retirement. This I feel most inclined to. Sometimes, thinking that I still possess some bodily strength, I seem not unwilling to work longer in the ministry, but my shallow talents, if I have any, and the difficult and dangerous matters coming up seem to check me. At other times the starting of a Brotherhood, the foundation of some other sisterhood and even going to the Indians, which was my former inclination 20 years ago, strike my mind. In this kind of fluctuation I am at present and have been several years. But I think that, once being arrived at some term or place in your parts, I could shortly resolve with your good advice and stick to the resolution. I must, however, observe to Your Reverence that there have been found a great many faults here in my person and conduct, for which I do not pretend to make apology, but think it my duty to inform you, that with knowledge of facts you may more easily communicate your opinion, which I beg your Reverence to pass freely. — I would wish not to have anything to meddle with the society or community of Bethlehem, but beg you to continue your fatherly care over them. Perhaps one or more men might come out with me to begin our settlement, where you think might suit best for any of said intentions. I intend to take one black man along, and what little money I have, my books and some church apparatus. I send my man also to Mr. Heffner, an old acquaintance, who may be able to give some information, as he used to travel much and may know some location that might be easy to get etc. I think I would not be very particular for my private person, but would be more so for my undertaking. Please to excuse my importunities and pray for me. I would try to come next Spring with God's grace.

Your most obedient Servant.

Chas. Nerinckx.

Bishop Rosati was glad to make such an acquisition for St. Louis, as was offered in the person of Father Nerinckx; and he wrote to him about a tract of land which he thought suitable. Father Nerinckx' answer is dated Loretto, Ky. 2nd January 1824.

The good Father touches on a question of Theology which has since that time exercised and disturbed many a mind and heart, the question of usury or taking interest on money lent. The Church had always held that money was unproductive and should not bear interest. Usury in all its ramifications was sinful. But the opinion gradually prevailed that modern conditions of business had made a change imperative, and that a reasonable rate of interest was permissible, so that the word usury would apply only to an excessive rate of interest. Father Nerinckx' remarks on this vexed question may seem strange in our Capitalistic age: but they are based on facts, and so merit our attention. The letter follows:

J. M. J.

Loretto Ky. 2 Jan. 1824.

Reverende admodum plurimumque Colende Domine.

But a few days ago I found your letter in the post office and the press of business has hindered me from answering sooner, as I am hardly ever at home. In regard to that tract of land, it is not in my power to give such a sum of money, even if the price was lower. If I retire, which is now my desire, a little place in the woods would be sufficient.

I thank Your Reverence very kindly for the good offers your favor made me. I beg the Lord to direct me and your prayers to assist me. I hope to have the happiness to see you after the high waters of next Spring be over.

Our Rt. Revd. Bishop (Flaget) seems not fully pleased with my plans of moving, but I think I am justifiable after having been nearly 20 years in this country without any resource but Providence, which has always been very favorable, and I hope will not forsake me. In regard to the Society of the Sisters I see no obligation that binds me to them; their absolute superior is the bishop, under whom I have been thus far one of their confessors. My way of supporting or assisting them has been broken up by the last tidings from Europe, where I lost my best friends by death. I have no care of any congregation and, of course, no income for works of charity. One less weighty reason, *salvo meliori*, of leaving arises from the difficulty of praxis, allowing usury, nearly throughout the country. It was not the practice 20 years ago, nor was it for 8 years following, when Revd. Mr. Badin and myself were nearly the only priests in this Country. I myself carried the question to Rome for my conscience sake. Every argument of the Americans was disapproved by Cardinal Litta.¹⁸ The general and common answer was to follow Benedict XIV. The divines of Belgium found no weight in the American arguments. Just now I receive fresh tidings from Rome to the same effect, that is, to follow *probatos auctores*; *nullum autem ego novi alicujus notae, imo ne ullum quidem infimae notae catholicum auctorem, qui haec pallia usurae admittat*. This, to be candid, is one great reason for my wish to retire, although not a single one of my qualities can allow me to continue in the holy ministry. Our bishop himself feels very uneasy about the question just mentioned. I wonder why, in a new country, the practice at least of such importance should be left in these doubts.

The meditated or proposed petition of the town of S. Louis or of some of these citizens for some sisters to assist their sick and orphans would no way clash with their rules or the intention of the institute, which is bound to pay any assistance that true and real necessity calls for. The difficulty would be to find fitting ones, to find also their support, which ought to be the same as in other houses, poor and common. If this be insisted upon, I ought to know what number etc. is called for, and what means are assigned. If I were at the place it might be more easily arranged. However, a letter of information about these particulars might serve to give some light on the subject matter. I will answer it as soon as it arrives, and if agreed, I might come out with some.

¹⁸ Cardinal Litta, Prefect of Propaganda at Rome. Father Nerinckx' opinion translated from the Latin: "I am told to follow approved authors (in regard to the question of usury); but I know no Catholic author of any note, not even one of the least note, who admits these excuses for usury."

There is nothing to hinder the receiving of novices at Bethlehem and their taking final vows, considering the moral impossibility of coming to Loretto; the distance, the expense and other inconveniences calling for this dispensation, *servatis tamen servandis*, to keep them united in the same union and Spirit. There are two new calls for sisters, the Iron Works, Ky., and Holy Cross. Olivet (Casey) is not yet finished, it will be in the spring. The buildings at Gethsemani will not be finished before Spring.

Rev. Mr. Abell (Mt. Carmel) seems to be pleased with his young colony of 6: "These sisters which you have given me," says his late letter, "behave in such manner as to turn my sorrows into joy, there seems to be but one strife among them, viz., who shall be most humble, most obedient, most exact in obedience to the rule." I wish these and all the other houses to deserve these praises *ad majorem Dei Deiparaeque Virginis gloriam et honorem*. Summa veneratione signo,

Your humble and most obedient servant.

Chas. Nerinckx.

P. S. Best wishes to the Mother and Sisters, I expect to write to them when at leisure.

As early as 1823 a "Female Charitable Society," consisting of ladies, Catholic and Protestant, French and American, had been founded in St. Louis, intended to ameliorate the conditions of the poor and sick and the orphans. In consequence of the exertions of these good ladies a movement was inaugurated to obtain a colony of the Lorettes for the purpose of caring for the sick and the orphans. Father Nerinckx heard of this plan, and expressed his willingness to further it. Hence the remarks in the letter just quoted.

Bishop-elect Rosati had notified Father Nerinckx' of his coming consecration as Bishop of Tenagra and Coadjutor to Bishop Du Bourg, which was to take place at Donaldsonville on March 25th, 1824. Hereupon Father Nerinckx sent a letter of hearty congratulation, and at the same time offered to bring all his Sisters to the diocese of St. Louis. This letter is the last one addressed to Bishop Rosati from Loretto. It is dated 24 January 1824.

J. M. J.

Loretto 24 Jan. 1824.

ILLUSTRISIME DOMINE.

I hasten to pay you my homage and to congratulate your Lordship on the high promotion, the Lord has been pleased to burden you with. I am convinced that it was not your wish nor desire, and that is the reason why you will submit yourself with more security to the divine appointments. The one that called you, has wherewith to support you and I hope and beg Him in His mercies ut custodiat introitum et exitum tuum. I wrote sometime ago an answer upon the request for hospital-nuns. I think they can be had, but I must mention to Your Lordship what my present situation is. I understand that shortly some remarkable alterations are to take place in our schools and, I doubt not, also in the rules, in the spirit of innovation and for making common (or popular) not for bettering the religious rules and principles. Such is the spirit of the age. I

will not oppose it, to avoid dissensions, but I wish not to share in it. It will cause me to make still more diligence in leaving these parts. The Bishop told me, if I went, I could take the sisters along with me. I know not whether he was in earnest, but supposing he was and they would, perhaps some might have the notion to follow such a poor leader, could they find a place, or be received in your diocese or any where in your parts? What number? And what means to transport them? I have some money to bear expenses, but then to find a place. I would decline to be their director except for a while, if I should suit. Providence perhaps, which permits this little change, might provide. I wish before hand to come to your parts, unless you could and would give sufficient information by writing, which by this present I humbly request you to do as soon as possible. I wish Your Lordship to recommend this affair to the Sisters of Bethlehem, that the Lord may be honored by it. With due veneration I remain

Your humble and obedient servant.

Chas. Nerinckx.

The date of this letter was January 24, 1824. From now on the events in Father Nerinckx's life begin to thicken. Bishop Flaget had informed the saintly founder of the Loretines as to complaints urged against him. There was no alternative but to leave Kentucky. On the 29th of May, 1824, he wrote the farewell letter "To the Dear Mother, Mothers and Sisters of the Loretto House and Society," in which he gives a brief account of his life and states the three great causes for his departure:

- 1) the impossibility of holding out for want of temporals, having no help but from Europe;
- 2) the sake of peace which is already somewhat interrupted;
- 3) the rest and tranquility of conscience, "which I cannot have here on account of difficulties in practice, which are lately come and surely increased, for which it seems no remedy can be obtained. These are the main motives."

On the 16th day of June 1824 Father Nerinckx left Loretto and on July 2, 1824, he arrived at Bethlehem near St. Mary's Seminary, Perry County, Missouri.

"The sisters were not expecting him," says Sister Eulalia, "he stepped into the hall and thus took them by surprise." Going to the chapel he gave Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and then departed for the Seminary, where he remained a few weeks. On the 26th of July he left the Barrens, said Mass for the last time in the Sisters' Chapel at Bethlehem, and then rode away to St. Louis. From St. Louis he made a visit to his friends the Jesuit Fathers at Florissant; thence he returned to St. Louis, made arrangements with the Indian agent in regard to sending twelve Indian girls to Bethlehem. On the 2nd of August he set out for Bethlehem Convent, full of glad anticipations in regard to his Indian venture. On his way, however, he stopped at a little village,¹⁹ where he preached, heard confessions,

¹⁹ Probably French Village in St. Francois County.

and said Mass, and even started a building-fund for a new church. But the exertion undergone by the noble priest brought on a fever. In company of Mr. James Van Rysselberge Father Nerinckx set out for Ste. Genevieve, where he was received with great kindness by the Pastor Father Dahmen, C.M.

An Sunday, August 8th Brother James assisted him into the chapel. Unable to say Mass, he would at least attend.

On August 12, 1824, at 5 o'clock in the evening Father Nerinckx expired in the 63rd year of his age. His remains were buried in the humble church-yard of Bethlehem. Bishop Rosati performed the last sacred rites. In December 1833 the remains of Father Nerinckx were translated to Loretto and reinterred in the Sisters' Cemetery, where a beautiful monument was erected over his tomb.

A most beautiful and touching tribute to the memory of the Apostle of Kentucky was rendered by Bishop Flaget, and published in the *United States Catholic Miscellany*, Wednesday, December 8, 1824. As it has never been reprinted in full, and consequently is not as well known as it deserves, we will give it as the final memorial of Father Nerinckx's relations to the Diocese of St. Louis:

"Rev. Charles Nerinckx was born in Flanders, in the Diocese of Malin es (Mechlin). He went through his studies with great credit, and subsequently acquired very extensive information in Theology, the Holy Scriptures, Church History, and other branches becoming his state. He became Parish Priest by concursus. But upon the breaking out of the Revolution he preferred losing his benefice, sacrificing his property and going into exile to taking the schismatical oath which was required.

It is now nearly twenty years since Mr. Nerinckx arrived in Kentucky and has edified its inhabitants by his truly Apostolic mode of life, a mode well worthy of the first ages of the Church. During a considerable time he had to serve alone with Rev. Mr. Badin, who well deserves the title of founder of this Diocese, the several congregations of this immense region. The continued travelling which Mr. Nerinckx was obliged to undergo, at all seasons of the year, and exposed to every inconvenience, would have terrified the most enterprising pioneer. As at the time of his arrival there were but one or two churches built, and the Catholics were scattered through the country, he went about from settlement to settlement, celebrating the holy mysteries from house to house—hearing confessions every morning, and obliged to fast almost every day in the year. His instructions were extremely simple and quite to the point. God alone can estimate the great fruit which they produced in all descriptions of hearers. Feeling greatly the inconvenience which arose from celebrating the divine mysteries in rooms devoted to every worldly purpose, he did his best to inspire all Catholics whom he used to visit, with a zeal for constructing their churches and endowing them with lands for the support of pastors, his exertions, in this respect, were crowned with perfect success. The Catholic Church of Kentucky has acquired much land, which is worth very little at present, but which will one day have considerable value. We count ten churches built solely by his exertions, eight wooden and two of brick; also six convents of nuns and as many oratories: he made two journeys to Europe in order to procure the means necessary for those great works, and the valuables which he procured exceeded

the amount of \$15,000. This aid was principally drawn from religious Flanders. The attempt of death to snatch Mr. Nerinckx from us has been ineffectual, for he lives amongst us in his works, and the monuments of the zeal of my virtuous friend are so multiplied in my Diocese, and his generous self devotion so well appreciated, that his name and that of his beneficent country are embalmed in the memory of my flock.

The legacy which my people value most is that of the Friends of Mary at the foot of the Cross; this admirable institution is their delight. The virtuous daughters of this society are the edification of all who know them; their singular piety, and their penitential lives remind us of all that we have read of the ancient monasteries of Palestine and of Thebais. Their number is over one hundred; they have charge of six schools. They give education to upwards of two hundred and fifty little girls yearly in their houses, and take in some orphans gratis. The missionaries generally send the children whom they wish to prepare for their first communion to those monasteries whenever they can, and they, as well as the boarders, are admirably well instructed in all that may be useful for this world and for eternity.

Mr. Nerinckx himself led an extremely austere and mortified life; his dress, his lodging, his food was poor, and he has filled his monasteries with this holy spirit. Those women seek for poverty in every thing, in their monasteries, in the plain simplicity of their chapels. The neatness, the cleanliness, the simplicity of their dwellings, and of their chapels, excites the wonder of their visitors. But nothing could exceed the devotion of Mr. Nerinckx to the holy Sacrament of our altars; in this respect he was a model for every clergyman. In his churches you saw only plainness except about the altar, and his devotion led him to aim at magnificence in this place, especially as regarded the tabernacle which was to contain the Holy of Holies; everything connected with the sacred mysteries called forth the exercise of this devotion. Never did he permit a day to pass without celebrating Mass, unless grievously ill or engaged in a long journey, and a rule of his monasteries is to keep up during even the night, the perpetual adoration, by a succession of two sisters to two sisters, before the holy Sacrament, to pay homage to the God who loved us so dearly, as after suffering for us to give to us under the sacramental veils his flesh to eat; to repair in some degree the disrespect with which this sacrament is treated by the ingratitude of the human race.

This good man had also great filial piety to Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and he desired to excite this affection for the Mother of our Savior in all with whom he had any intercourse. He admired her spirit of patient love and resignation in her suffering, especially when she beheld her dearly beloved, her Creator and her Son, upon that Cross, at whose foot she wept. Often did the ejaculation which he taught to others, escape from himself: O! suffering Jesus! O! sorrowful Mary! In all the churches which he served he established the Society of the Holy Rosary and the confraternities and sisterhood of the Scapular; and almost all the Catholics, men, women and children, are in one or more of those societies. Nothing could be more edifying than his piety regarding the dead. It is quite impossible to pass by any of the cemeteries which he has laid out, without feeling deep sentiments of religion and having a sweet sensation of deep melancholy blended with the hope of a Christian. In the midst of the abode of the Christian dead is raised the emblem of the Chris-

tian Faith, a large cross surrounded by a ballustrade for the convenience of the pious friends who come to pray for their departed brethren. At the head of each grave you also find the emblematic cross, inscribed with the dates of the birth and the death and the name of the brother or the sister whose bones are there laid up for the hope of resurrection. One of the rules of his nuns is to go with their scholars in procession to the cemetery of the convent and there frequently to pray for the repose of their sisters.

Mr. Nerinckx obtained from the Pope considerable Indulgences for those who, in his Convent, offer up the holy sacrifice of the Mass for departed souls, and the indulgence is applicable to those who assist at the Mass. He never permitted a week to pass without offering up the Mass for this great object.

His love for retirement was such, that he never paid a visit of ceremony. Indeed he never paid a visit but as the good of his neighbors or the duty of his ministry made obligatory. His watchings, even in his most painful journeys, were very long and always were spent either in study or in prayer, and prayer appeared to be his great solace.

It was to be expected that so holy a life should be terminated by a holy death. Thus it was in the discharge of the severe duties of his laborious ministry that he contracted that illness which produced his death. In the month of last July he went to visit a filiation of his convent, which he had sent into the State of Missouri, and which was more than 130 leagues from the place of his usual residence. After his arrival at the residence of his dear daughters he wrote to me a most affecting letter, describing the good which they had effected in that Diocese, and the hopes which he entertained of their being one day useful to the Indians. Thence he went to visit an establishment of Flemish Jesuits, which is pretty numerous and about thirty leagues from his Nuns. After spending some days of edifying fervor in the midst of those holy and beloved countrymen of his, he set out on his return to the Monastery of the Nuns and thence intended coming to Kentucky. Near St. Louis he had an interview with an Indian Chief, who promised to send him a great many of the young females to be educated by his Nuns. He made haste to carry this news to the Monastery, and his heart burned within him whilst his imagination pictured to itself the good prospect which lay open to his hopes. On his road however was the path of a settlement of eight or ten Catholic families who had not seen a Priest during more than two years; desirous of doing all the good in his power, he assembled them, heard their confessions, gave them instructions and celebrated the holy sacrifice of the Mass; he was thus occupied from a little after day-break until towards 3 o'clock. Seeing the good dispositions of those Catholics, he proposed to them to build a church, in order to encourage Priests to come to them; a subscription was immediately opened by those present; out of his small means he gave ten dollars, and signatures for over nine hundred were instantly affixed to the sheet. After this exertion in such broiling weather, he felt fever. Next day it continued, but apparently much diminished; he wished to go to Ste. Genevieve, which was only five or six leagues distant, and though his journey was short, still the burning sun and the exertion increased the fever very considerably. The Pastor of Ste. Genevieve received him with kindness and affection, he took to bed, Physicians came immediately, and paid him every attention; but to no purpose. Mr. Nerinckx was, I trust, in the eye of God, ripe for Heaven; and his Lord saw it was time to bestow upon his faithful

servant the recompense of his labors. He had the use of his reason to the last, and edified all, who saw him, by his piety and his patience. On the ninth day about nine in the morning he received the holy viaticum and extreme unction, after having confessed; and about five in the evening, he breathed out his pure soul to return to its Creator, without a struggle, in perfect resignation. His nuns requested to have his body, which was conveyed from Ste. Genevieve to their Cemetery. May his soul rest in peace."

Nearly a century has elapsed since Father Charles Nerinckx died: but, as Bishop Flaget wrote, he still "lives amongst us in his works"; and the Archdiocese of St. Louis may well be proud of its early intimate relations to the saintly Founder of the Friends of Mary at the Foot of the Cross.



AN APPEAL
HISTORICAL MATTER DESIRED
by the Catholic Historical Society of St. Louis



Books and pamphlets on American History and Biography, particularly those relating to Church institutions, ecclesiastical persons and Catholic lay people within the limits of the Louisiana Purchase;

Old newspapers; Catholic modern papers; Parish papers, whether old or recent:

We will highly appreciate the courtesy of the Reverend Pastors who send us regularly their Parish publications;

Manuscripts; narratives of early Catholic settlers or relating to early Catholic settlements; letters:

In the case of family papers which the actual owners wish to keep in their possession, we shall be grateful for the privilege of taking copies of these papers;

Engravings, portraits, Medals. etc;

In a word, every object whatsoever which, by the most liberal construction, may be regarded as an aid to, or illustration of the history of the Catholic Church in the Middle West.

Contributions will be credited to the donors and preserved in the Library or Archives of the Society, for the use and benefit of the members and other duly authorized persons.

Communications may be addressed either to the Secretary, or to the Librarians of the

Catholic Historical Society of St. Louis,

209 Walnut Street, St. Louis, Mo.

NOTES



HISTORICAL

Bishop Rosati, in an unused bank account book jotted down occasional remarks, some of which are quite remarkable:

A. 1838: given a letter of recommendation to Michael H. Moony and Bernard O'Hare—for collecting money to build a church in Alton.

Little Muddy Creek — title of Church S. Thaddaeus — Fayetteville; St. Liborius.

In St. Clair Co., Ill., 34 miles from St. Louis, near Little Mud Creek, 5 miles from Kaskaskia River there are now (July 1838) 16 families, German, other 4 families are expected—on this side of the creek there are seven families three of which are Irish, in a little town called Fayetteville—they wish to build a church (St. Liborius) on the other side of the river. Bern. Dingwerth has given ten acres of land for the Church. Wm. ... (Harvey?) offers a room in his house for the priest. I have promised to send the Rev. Mr. Ostlangenberg who will attend Shoal Creek, Fayetteville and St. Lucas.

(1838) Mr. John Scott, 105 years old, a convert to the Catholic religion in July 1834, lives 5 miles from Potosi, Washington Co., Mo. The Rev. Louis Tucker has baptized 16 of his grandchildren.

The Sisters Benedicta (Sup.), Sr. Frances, Sr. Mary, Leocadia, Lucille and Therese Augustine started from Bethlehem to begin the Academy of St. Vincent at the Cape on the 25 (Sept.) and arrived on the 26th. The school will be commenced on the 2 Nov. 1838.

On the 18th Oct. (1838) a boy's school was begun under the direction of Mr. Brands. — Sr. Agnes Hart with Sisters Alodia and Eulalia started for Arkansas 27 Sept. 1838.

The priests from Ste. Genevieve once a month serve the Congregation of Ste. Anne, Petit Canada. A Church will be built at the Big River which will be called St. Gregory; it will be served by the priests of Old Mines (Transl. from the French).

A church is to be built at West Philadelphia on the Mississippi River, 25 miles from Cape Girardeau, Scott Co., Mo., under the appellation of St. Bernard.

The church at Louisville, Lincoln Co., Mo., 30 by 20 feet, 8 Cath. families, 55 miles from St. Charles.

The church at Riviere aux Vases—Ste. Philomene; the church at the Establishment: St. Matthias.

(1839) In Clark Co., Mo.—Waterloo Co. Seat (highest on the river)—12 miles from the Mississippi River there are 38 families of Catholics. They have a church in North Santa Fe—log building, 42 by 20 feet, now (21 Jan.) covered.

* * *

In Nov. 1839 Bp. Rosati received from Bp. Chabrat 1,000 masses, the honorary of them, at twenty Five cents, was 200 Dollars.

* * *

In his Relation of the Consecration of the Cathedral of St. Louis (26. Oct. 1834) Rosati states, that the Cathedral is the 5th Church he has consecrated; the first was the Church of St. Charles, the 2d the Church of St. Ferdinand, Florissant, the 3d the Church of St. Joachim at Old Mines (Vieille Mines), the 4th the Church of St. James at Potosi. — He hopes, soon to consecrate the Church at the Barrens, the Church of Ste. Genevieve and that of Mt. Carmel, Carondelet.

* * *

The Archives of St. Louis Diocese contain the following documents on the "Catholic Day School" by Messrs. McDonald and Bartelot:

1) A circular which Bishop Rosati sent to his priests (1839): "These gentlemen, under the direction of the bishop, follow a rule similar to those of Religious communities devoted to the instruction of youth. They are willing to receive any young men of good conduct who might be called to join them in their pious undertaking. They have to obtain from one of the communities of France some good and experienced brothers and it is their intention to join their Institute and propagate it amongst us with the blessings of a solid and virtuous education. The Rt. Rev. Prelates and the Rev. Pastors of the different dioceses of the Union are earnestly solicited to encourage this institution, fostering the vocation of such young men as might be proper for the institute and directing them to St. Louis.

2) Febr. 20th 1842 Bishop Rich. Kenrick writes as follows: "The Freres du St. Viateur have arrived. Three of them are with Rev. Mr. Fontbonne at Carondelet, two are about to occupy a house which Mrs. Biddle has placed at their disposition for two years. Mr. Shephard is our sacristan, although this is no assistance in a pecuniary point of view, as we are obliged to keep the sacristan we have, Mr. Shephard being unable to do the heavy work, such as ringing the bells. . . ."

3) June 3d 1842 Bp. Kenrick writes again: "The Clerks of St. Viateur have not succeeded. They are, with the exception of W. McDonald, who keeps school for himself in the north of the city, and of Mr. Shephard who is the sacristan of the Cathedral, at Carondelet with Mr. Fontbonne, living on the remains of the small sum they brought with them here. Mr. McDonald is a good man, but ought not to have been sent to France, to perform a novitiate at his age; and as he bore with (it) in patience, the direction of any of his companions, he may be said to be virtually separated from the society. In all the

French villages the people wish to have English masters; and as to the priests of the diocese taking them as companions, the thing is impossible, for in most instances, the priests have scarcely wherewithal to support themselves. Their success, then, is in my mind, exceedingly doubtful. As two or three of these have made some studies, I have signified them my willingness to receive them in the Seminary, where they will have the opportunity of pursuing their studies, and, perhaps, when ordained they may have better chances of success, than they at present enjoy."

* * *

On March 14, 1832, Bishop Rosati writes Rev. John Timon:

"I am glad to hear of the new increase of the Snowbush (Schnorbus) settlement. It is a good acquisition for the community at large and for religion in particular. These good Germans are very industrious and useful citizens and excellent Catholics. Many compliments from me to Mr. Snowbush (Schnorbus) and to all the new-comers. A good number of them (i. e. Germans) are come to St. Louis. I directed some of them to Mr. Roussin to Richwood, where there is a large body of public land vacant, and I think they will find the place suitable to them. Others have been to look at the country towards St. Charles, others towards Belleville. A large number of the same are to come. I expect a good priest from Lorraine, who speaks French and German, and is actually parish priest in the diocese of Nancy. St. Mary's (St. Mary's Chapel) will soon be finished and any congregation in this diocese would feel proud to have such a fine Church."

* * *

In 1846 the first systematical and effective effort was made, to obtain, for the St. Louis diocese, priests who were able to provide for the numerous German immigrants. Father Jos. Melcher, with the title of Vicar General was sent to Europe by Bishop Rich. Kenrick. Upon his return (July 5, 1847) the Catholic newspapers of the country reported, that Vicar General Melcher arrived with four priests and ten students. None of the papers however gave the names. — A manuscript in the Archives of the Archdiocese of St. Louis (Memoranda of the Rev. Edm. Saulnier, Feb. 1844—Nov. 1857) contains the following notice: "Venerunt die quinta Julii 1847 ex Europa Dn. Vic. Gen. Melcher, Ursus Jos. Meister, Georgius Ortlieb, Cajetan Zopotti ex Austria, N. Rodzorski ex Polonia." (There came, on July 5th, 1847, from Europe: Ursus Jos. Meister, George Ortlieb, Cajetan Zopotti of Austria, N. Rodzorski of Poland.) — The names of the students he does not give. In a memorial, published in St. Louis a. 1917, at the occasion of the 62d Convention of the "Central Verein," p. 49, an attempt was made to construct a partial list of the students from contemporary documents: the Alsatians F. X. Weiss and S. Siegrist; the Bohemian Trojan; Jacob Stehle and J. Anselm from Lorraine, J. Blaarer and Seb. Brutscher from Switzerland and L. Rosi from the Tyrol.

Rev. M. Shine of Plattsmouth, Neb., a few weeks ago, has sent us the original complete list of the priests and students from the French edition of the *Annals of the Propagation of Faith* (XIX, p. 520); since then we also found it in the English edition, VIII, p. 396:

"On the 12th of May the following departures for the United States took place, under the superintendence of the Very Rev. M. Melcher, Vicar General of the diocese of St. Louis. — Priests: Rev. Messrs. Joseph Meister, of the diocese of Bale; George Ortlieb, of the diocese of Strasbourg; Cajetan Zoppoth, of the diocese of Linz; Francis Rutkuski, of the diocese of Breslau. — Students: Francis Weise, of the diocese of Strasbourg; Simon Siegrist, of the diocese of Nancy; John Anselm, of the diocese of Nancy; Francis Blaarer of the diocese of St. Gall; Louis Rosi, of the diocese of Modena; Joseph Girard of the diocese of Nancy; Francis Trojan, of the diocese of Modena; Bernard Siedert, of the diocese of Muenster; Peter Carbot, of the diocese of Nancy; Mathias Cobbin, of the diocese of Fribourg, in Brisgau."

There are some evident errors in the list of the *Annals*: Ortlieb was from the diocese of Nancy, not of Strasbourg; the Polish name was Rutkowski; the first student's name was Weiss, not Weise; Simon Siegrist was from the diocese of Strasbourg, not of Nancy; Francis Trojan was from the diocese of Leitomishl in Bohemia, not of Modena in Italy.

The efforts of Father Melcher brought to the diocese of St. Louis a good number of subjects, but the relief was only apparent, as will be seen from the later history of the fourteen priests and students:

Rev. Ursus Meister became pastor of Apple Creek, Perry Co., in March 1847 of Jefferson City, 1853 of Moniteau and other Counties; in 1859 he left the diocese and became attached to Vincennes; he was killed by a falling tree, Feb. 25, 1864, at St. Anthony, Ind.

Rev. Geo. Ortlieb was appointed pastor of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Carondelet, but after some years returned to France (Nancy), 1852.

Cajetan Zopotti (Zoppoth?) was sent to Benton, Scott Co., but left the diocese in 1848; in the directories of 1849 he appears at Cincinnati, of 1850 at Chicago; since 1851 is not found in the list of priests.

F. Rutkowski became pastor of Weston, Platte Co.; 1852-56 he was stationed at Dardenne, St. Charles Co.; then he disappears from the directory.

F. X. Weiss is the only one who did lasting services in the diocese; for many years he was pastor of the "German Settlement" (Zell), Ste. Genevieve Co.; then, since 1865 of Ste. Genevieve, where he died March 3, 1901.

Simon Siegrist, a great preacher, was pastor of Meramec (Mattese and Maxville); 1849 he founded St. Peter and Paul's Parish at St. Louis, but left the diocese Jan. 1, 1858 and died at Indianapolis as pastor of St. Mary's Church Oct. 28, 1873.

John Anselm, for a time (1850-56) pastor of Holy Trinity, then of French Village, St. Francois Co., also left the diocese and returned to Lorraine (1864).

Also Father Blaarer after some years of sickness and failure in Jefferson, Ste. Genevieve and Henry Counties returned to Switzerland (1858).

Louis Rosi was appointed pastor of New Madrid; 1849 of Richwoods; July 1, 1853, of Little Canada (French Village), where he was drowned on a sick call, Aug. 29, 1853.

Francis Trojan, later on pastor of St. John of Nepomuk's Church at St. Louis, left the diocese to work in Illinois.

Girard, Siedert, Carbot and Cobbin were never ordained; we could not discover what became of them. (Jacob Stehle mentioned in the list of the memorial was born in the diocese of Nancy, entered the Barrrens Seminary 1847, was ordained Aug. 29, 1847, but left the diocese for Milwaukee in 1858. — Seb. Brutscher intended to leave with Melcher; his papers are found in the diocesan archives of St. Louis; he never crossed the ocean.)

From *Mo. Advocate and St. Louis Enquirer*, April 8, 1826.

Bishop Du Bourg's Address delivered before the Governor and Legislature of Louisiana on the 8th of January, 1826 (Anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans).

Excellency, Gentlemen of the Senate and Gentlemen of the House of Representatives:—

On each anniversary of a day, the most memorable in the annals of America, dearest in the remembrance of Louisiana, the patriot contemplates with mingled emotions of awe and tenderness the sovereign powers of the State coming in all the pomp allowed by our wise institutions to pay to the Almighty in His temple, the homage of public gratitude for the most signal boon of His protection of us. This celebration is intended as a solemn acknowledgment of our dependence on His supreme power, a profession of our faith that His is the Kingdom, the honor and the glory for ever and ever more. And, indeed, had anything been wanting to convince us of a truth attested by the voice of nature, by the concurrent assent of all nations, and by the consciousness we all possess of the shortness of man's views and of the infirmity of his powers, could any event have been better calculated to produce and perpetuate that sacred conviction than that which we now commemorate? Still is echoing in our ears that sound of alarm, which, at an unexpected moment, struck dismay in every breast, and bid us to be unprepared for the worst at the hand of an enemy ready to spare no man in his wrath, no woman in his lust.

What a sound of confusion was at once presented in every part of our City! — —

A powerful host of disciplined soldiery, led in the field by the most experienced commanders, ready to pour upon a population unaccustomed to the toils and tactics of war; a population, the motley assemblage of men of all nations, of all languages, of all political opin-

ions—a City open on all sides to the inroad of our foe, unprovided with any means of resistance and defence, and yet the enemy at our doors; not one moment to be lost in order to stop his infuriated progress.

Men confusedly running to arms, women seized with deadly paleness; everywhere a dreadful silence, interrupted only with the dismal knell of the alarm bell, the appalling roar of the cannon, or the half-smothered cries of poor distracted females; a scene, the horrors of which were still enhanced by the gloom of a cloudy winter night. It was amidst so many disadvantages that our ill-equipped, ill-assorted militia, ran precipitately, and out of breath, to meet the advancing phalanx. But Oh! Providence! The very circumstances which seemed to render that conflict so unequal, had by His unerring hand been calculated to throw the whole advantage on our side. The mist of the night, spread over both armies, served only to cover to the eyes of the enemy, the nature, the small number of our troops; and under its tutelar protection, the word of command, repeated through our ranks in various languages, magnified in their minds our means of resistance to the most alarming degree. It was the pillar of cloud raised again by a divine hand to throw into utter darkness the operations and counsels of our wise invaders. From this moment the scale of affairs was turned; the enemy cautiously retreating, left to the skillful General time to pitch his encampment, to fortify it, and raise an impregnable barrier between the unhallowed battalions and the objects of their rapacity.

The consequences of those measures are well known to us all, and all the glory reaped by the heroic commander and his undaunted companions on the celebrated 8th of January, *was* already won by anticipation, by the skillful preparations to resist the attack.

What a day, Gentlemen, for all of us who witnessed the awful event! Methinks it still sounds in my ears, that dreadful and continued fire and thundering, which in the space of two hours, whilst it enveloped our City in lightning and smoke, and convulsed all its habitations, leveled down to dust the most gallant Commander and the flower of the British Army. Veterans who had encountered in Europe the first Captain that ever adorned the page of Military records, who had stood unmoved on the brow of the fiercest battles, were mowed like grass by the scythe of our rude peasantry and thousands of mangled bodies served to fertilize our fields, whilst hardly a hair fell from the heads of those over whom the hand of the Almighty was extended.

Surely the finger of God was there—and no wonder—is He not the friend and protector of Justice? Were not His holy altars, during the whole continuance of danger surrounded by fervent votaries, who reminded Him of His ancient mercies? Yes, the finger of God was there. And the glorious commander of the day, the Man of His Providence, fitted by His own hand to be the tutelar angel of his country in its days of need and distress—the heroic Jackson, honored himself much more by that humble and pious acknowledgment than by all the deeds of fame which it was given him to achieve.

We are then bound to that Immortal Being by ties of gratitude, which no lapse of time, no distraction of pleasure or affairs, will ever loosen or diminish. Saved by His hand from dangers not inferior to those from which He rescued Israel, and by means hardly less conspicuous, we shall give vent to our grateful feelings in the confession of Moses; and with the Church, after celebrating His greatness and bounty in a strain of ecstatic praises, we shall join to supplicate at His feet the continuation of His favors.

Vouchsafe then, Lord of our fathers, to keep extended over the people of Thy inheritance that paternal hand of Thine which imparts salvation and blessing.

Salvum fac populum tuum Domine et benedic hereditati tue.

Rule over them by the Sanctity of the law and by the efficacy of Thy grace—assist with Thy holy inspirations, the first Magistrate, the rulers and law-givers of the land, that by the wisdom of their resolutions they may promote the accomplishment of our exalted destinies *et rege illos et extolle illos usque in aeternum.*



DOCUMENTS FROM OUR ARCHIVES

Correspondence of Bishop Du Bourg with Propaganda

X

BISHOP DU BOURG TO CARDINAL A. DUGNANI.¹

Dec. 1816.

Eminence.

La lettre dont vous m'avez honoré, datée le 23 Novembre dernier, en réponse à celle que j'eus l'honneur de vous adresser de Paris, dans le mois d'Octobre, tout en ajoutant de nouveaux degrés à ma reconnaissance pour les nouvelles grâces que Votre Emce. a daigné solliciter et obtenir pour moi de Sa Sainteté, m'a cependant causé une amertume, qu'Elle me permettra de verser dans son sein. Elle me demande pour-quoi je me suis rendu à Paris, au lieu de me transporter sur le champ dans mon Diocèse, selon *'lorare* qu'Elle me dit m'en avoir précédemment envoyé. Ma réponse, Eminence, est facile. Je n'ai reçu que deux lettres de vous, depuis que j'ai eu l'honneur de vous communiquer mon projet de transférer ma résidence à St. Louis de Illinois. Dans la première V. E. donnoit à ce plan sa haute approbation et celle des Eminentissimes membres de la S. Congrégation. — J'eus l'honneur de proposer alors deux questions à Votre Emce. : la première était, si, vu que Mgr. l'Evêque de Bardstown avait entamé une négociation avec les habitans de St. Louis pour l'établissement de l'Evêque, il convenait que j'en attende le résultat avant de m'y rendre. — La seconde, si je devais aussi différer le départ de mes Missionnaires. La réponse de Votre Emce. fut que pour ce qui me regarde, *je ferais bien d'attendre*; mais qu'il fallait faire partir les Missionnaires, soit afin de ne pas donner à leur zèle le tems de se refroidir, soit pour répondre à la confiance de ceux qui avaient contribué de leurs aumônes aux fraix de ma Mission.

Je me suis conformé, Monseigneur, aux ordres de Votre Emce. sur ces deux points. J'ai déjà embarqué treize ecclésiastiques, dont neuf pour St. Louis et quatre pour la Nouvelle Orléans. Quant à moi, je ne suis pas resté oisif; je me suis occupé de faire en France une nouvelle recrue d'hommes, et je suis allé à Paris pour solliciter pour

¹ Archiv. S. C. de Prop. Fide. Scritture Referite nei Congressi America Centrale. Dal Canada all'Istmo di Panama. Codice No. 3. Dal. 1818 atto. il 1817.

eux et pour moi l'assistance du gouvernement. J'en ai obtenu la promesse d'un passage gratuit pour tous mes coopérateurs et moi, par le premier bâtiment du Roi qui s'expédierait au Printemps pour l'Amérique. J'ai déjà enrôlé de plus au moins douze ou quinze excellents sujets avec la permission de leurs ordinaires respectifs. J'ai enfin l'espoir fondé d'un secours effectif encore plus considérable, qui m'engage à retourner à Paris, pour y passer le reste de l'hiver. Je ne crois pas, Eminence, avoir pu mieux faire pour répondre soit à Vos vues, soit à mes obligations envers mon Diocèse. Je me persuade que le grand nombre de Vos occupations vous aura fait oublier que la prolongation de mon séjour en France n'était en effet que le résultat de Vos ordres, et c'est la consolation que ma conscience me présente pour adoucir ce que vos reproches ont de pénible pour mon cœur.

Du reste, Eminence, c'est aussi l'avis de mon Vénérable Collègue Mgr. l'Évêque de Bardstown, que je dois différer mon départ jusqu'au Printemps, soit pour lui donner le tems de faire à St. Louis les arrangements convenables pour ma réception et mon établissement, soit surtout pour me donner à moi-même celui de réunir le plus grand nombre possible de coopérateurs, dont son Diocèse est aussi dépourvu que le mien. "En amenassiez-vous trente avec vous, m'écrivit-il, ils seraient tous placés avant un mois." Il me donne à cet égard d'autres détails, que je supprime pour ne pas fatiguer V. E., et puis encore parce que j'ai le cœur trop froissé de ses reproches, pour pouvoir me livrer à cet épanchement filial auquel bontés précédentes m'avaient accoutumé. V. E. daignera compatir à une peine que je ne crois pas avoir méritée. Un mot de consolation de sa part y apporterait un grand adoucissement ; mais il n'ajoutera rien à la profonde vénération avec laquelle j'ai l'honneur d'être.

✠ L. Guil. Ev. de la N. Orl.

² Cf. Letter of Bishop Flaget, in Griffin American Catholic Historical Researches. Vol. XXI. 158.

TRANSLATION.

December 1816.

Your Eminence.

The letter with which you have honored me, dated Nov. 23 in answer to the one which I had the honor to address to you from Paris in the month of October, enhancing, as it did, my sense of obligation for the new favors Your Eminence has deigned to solicit and to obtain for me from His Holiness, has nevertheless caused a feeling of bitterness which You will permit me to pour out into Your bosom, demanding as it does, why I went to Paris instead of starting for my diocese according to the order which You say You sent me. My answer, Your Eminence, is very simple. I received but two letters from You, since I had the honor of communicating to You my purpose of transferring my residence to St. Louis in the Illinois country. In the first letter Your Eminence, and the eminent members of the Sacred

Congregation highly approved of this project. I then had the honor to propose two questions, to Your Eminence. The first was this: Considering that the Bishop of Bardstown has entered into negotiations with the inhabitants of St. Louis, concerning the establishment of an episcopal see, whether it would not be advisable to wait for the result before I go there. The second question was: Whether I should postpone the departure of my missionaries. The answer of Your Eminence was: that, as far I myself was concerned, I would do well to wait, but that it was imperative to send on the missionaries, partly in order to keep their zeal from growing cold, partly to satisfy the expectations of those who have contributed to the expenses of my mission. I conformed to the orders of Your Eminence in those two points. I have already caused thirteen ecclesiastics to take ship, nine for St. Louis and five for New Orleans. I myself have not remained inactive. I have recruited new men in France and I repaired to Paris to solicit for them and for myself the assistance of the Government. I have obtained from it the promise of a free passage for all my cooperators and for myself, by the first royal ship to leave for America next Spring. I have already enrolled twelve or fifteen (more or less) excellent subjects, with the permission of their respective ordinaries. Finally, I have well-founded hope of a still more considerable and effective assistance, which necessitates my return to Paris and my stay there for the rest of the winter. I do not think, Your Eminence, that I could have better responded to Your views, as well as to the requirements of my diocese.

I am convinced, Your manifold occupations have led You to forget, that my prolonged sojourn in France was actually the result of Your orders, and this is the consolation my conscience renders to me, to sweeten the bitterness, which Your reproaches left in my heart.

Finally, Your Eminence, it was the opinion of my venerable Colleague, Msgr. the Bishop of Bardstown, that I should defer my departure until Spring, partly to give him time to make the necessary arrangements for my reception and my establishment in St. Louis, partly and principally, to give me time to gather the greatest possible number of cooperators, of which his diocese is as much in need, as mine. "If you were to bring thirty of them," he writes, "they would be placed within a month." He gives other details, which I omit because I fear to fatigue Your Eminence, and then also because my heart is too deeply afflicted by Your reproaches to permit the filial effusiveness, to which Your former kindness had accustomed me. Your Eminence will be pleased to have compassion on the affliction which I do not think, I deserved. A word of consolation from You will bring me great relief, but it will add nothing to the profound veneration with which I have the honor to be,

✠ Louis William, Bishop of New Orleans.

XI

BISHOP DU BOURG TO CARDINAL A. DUGNANI.¹

St. Louis, 16 Februarii 1819.

Confidentielle

Eminence.

J'ai eu l'honneur de vous adresser trois lettres depuis mon arrivée dans mon Diocèse, où je vous rendais compte de mes progrès et de mes espérances. Le bien se fait plus lentement que le mal. Ma Cathédrale et mon Séminaire ont été suspendus par défaut d'argent. L'un et l'autre vont reprendre avec une nouvelle activité, et seront j'espère, en état de servir cette année. Les Dames Religieuses du S. Coeur s'établissent avec beaucoup de bénédictions. — M. M. de la Mission se recrutent, et feront merveilles. Ils ont déjà quelques élèves du pays pour l'état ecclésiastique. — Je suis en traité avec le Provincial des Jésuites, qui me fait espérer prochainement un établissement de sa Société sur les bords du Misouri. L'imagination a peine à suivre le progrès de l'émigration vers ces fertiles et immenses contrées. Dans peu d'années ce sera une des parties les plus populeuses de l'Amérique. J'ai envoyé le premier Missionnaire en reconnaissance.. Il y a été très bien accueilli, et m'annonce une riche moisson. —

Mr. Rossetti s'est arrêté à Philade. avec ses ouvriers. Je lui ai écrit pour l'inviter et lui indiquer les moyens de venir me joindre. La prédication fait de grands biens dans ces quartiers. Les conversions des Protestants se multiplient, et il n'y a pas de doute que l'oeuvre de Dieu y fit des grandes progrès, si nous pouvions disséminer des livres. Mais ils sont rares et très chers. La Propagande pourrait nous donner à cet égard un puissant secours, en nous envoyant un apparatus d'imprimerie assez complet pour publier des livres en Anglais et en Français. Nous avons un excellent Catholique du métier qui offre de nous monter l'établissement. Je conjure V. E. de prendre intérêt à cette proposition. C'est le moyen le plus efficace et peut être le moins dispendieux dont la S. Congrégation puisse nous assister. Mr. de Andreis écrit sur ce sujet au vén. Mr. Colucci et le prie de faire auprès de V. Em. les fonctions de solliciteur. Il est important à ne rien oublier, et que la personne chargée de V. Em. de faire cette commission se souvienne que le Français a des lettres accentués, et l'Anglais quelques caractères de plus que l'Italien, tels que k, w, x, y.

Au milieu de mes sujets d'espérance, j'ai aussi des cuisants chagrins. Un de plus sensibles est la défection d'un jeune soudiacre, nommé Valentin, alsacien de naissance, qui après avoir été travaillé de tentations qui lui ont quelques fois porté au cerveau, me déclare qu'il ne peut tenir plus long tems. Il a quitté le Séminaire, songe à entrer dans le commerce, et me prie de le dispenser du bréviaire en attendant qu'il puisse être dispensé de la continence. Je l'ai renvoyé pour l'un comme pour l'autre, à la décision du St. Siège, lui promettant

¹ Archiv. S. C. de Prop. Fide. Scritture Referite nei Congressi. America Centrale. Dal Canada all'Istmo di Panama. Codice No. 4. Dal 1818 atto. il 1820.

de solliciter la dispense, à condition qu'il quitterait mon Diocèse et se retirerait dans un quartier de l'Amérique, où il fût inconnu. Vraiment, Eminence, ce pauvre jeune homme est digne de compassion. Il en perdra certainement la tête, après avoir donné de véritables scandales mille fois plus fâcheux ici qu'ils ne seraient en Europe. Je supplie V. Emce. de décider cette double question dans toute l'étendue de sa miséricorde.

Les esprits paraissant s'adoucir à la Nlle. Orl. quoiqu'il existe toujours dans le P. Ant. de Sedella une défiance qui tiennne de l'opposition. Je travaille à lui ôter deux mauvais sujets de vicaires, qui sont depuis 12 ans le scandale de la ville. Les Marguilliers, qui m'étaient opposés, me font solliciter aujourd'hui d'envoyer deux bons prêtres pour cette paroisse, et de suspendre au moins un de ces deux misérables. Si le P. A. ne leur prête pas son appui, les choses pourront se rétablir. Il y faut une patience et une sagesse à toute épreuve. J'ai bien besoin que Dieu m'accorde l'une et l'autre.

J'apprens avec beaucoup de douleur les mouvemens excités à N. York, Philadelphie, Charleston par le patri Irlandais, qui ont déterminé Mgr. de Barth à refuser l'épiscopat. J'oserais suggérer un terme moyen, qui serait de ne nommer, ni un Français ni un Irlandais, mais un Américain, le Rev. Mr. Fenwick, de Maryland, âgé d'environ 36 ans, homme à grands talens pour la prédication, et d'un caractère très prononcé, serait, je crois, le seul à propos. Il n'y a qu'un obstacle, c'est qu'il est Jésuite; mais le St. Siège peut facilement le lever. V. Emce. jugera sans doute que quoique je ne suis pas chargé de ces affaires, je suis cependant obligé comme Evêque, de lui faire part de mon opinion. L'Episcopat est solidaire. En général je peux l'assurer qu'il y a peu de fonds à faire sur les Prêtres Irlandais qui viennent en Amérique, on n'entend parler que de scandales donnes par leur excès. Et j'ose bien prédire que si Mr. Har. venait à prévaloir, c'en serait fait de l'esprit de Religion à Philadelphie. C'est déjà un terrible préjugé contre lui que de se pousser à l'Episcopat. Nommez, V. Eminence, des hommes pieux qui tremblent à la vue d'un pareil fardeau; et ne vous laissez pas séduire par la vaine réputation de beaux Prédicateurs. Ces hommes à belles phrases ruinent absolument la piété dans leurs coeurs. Pardonnez encore une fois. Ce sont des effusions que je répands dans le sein de V. Eminence tout seul. J'ai tout lieu de croire qu'il existe autour de vous un parti secret très influent parce qu'il est *caché*. Je n'ai d'intérêt à le dire que celui de la Religion. V. Emce. connaît mes sentimens; ils sont et seront toujours ceux d'un attachement sans bornes pour la gloire et l'honneur du St. Siège, et de l'affection filiale la plus respectueuse pour votre Sacrée personne.

De V. Emce. &c.

✠ L. Guil. Ev. de la Louisiane.

St. Louis (Missouri)

le 16 Fevrier 1819.

TRANSLATION.

St. Louis, February 16, 1819.

Confidential.

Your Eminence.

I had the honor of addressing to you three letters after my arrival in my diocese, in which I gave an account of my progress and my expectations. It takes more time to do good than evil. The work on my Cathedral and my Seminary had to be suspended for lack of money. It will be resumed on both with new energy, and they will, I trust, be completed this year. The Ladies of the Sacred Heart have established themselves, to the great satisfaction of all. The Gentlemen of the Missions are gaining recruits and are still doing wonders. They have even now some native students for the ecclesiastical state. I have entered into negotiations with the Provincial of the Jesuits, who gives me hopes of an early establishment of their Society on the banks of the Missouri. The imagination can hardly follow the progress of immigration to these fertile countries. In a few years this will be one of the most populous parts of America. I have sent the first missionary on a reconnoitering expedition.² He was well received, and he holds forth great hopes for a rich harvest.

Mr. Rossetti remained in Philadelphia with his workmen. I wrote to invite him and to make known to him how to come here. Preaching does a great deal of good in these parts. The conversions of Protestants are multiplied, and there is no doubt, that the work of God in this respect, would make great progress, if we could disseminate books. But they are scarce and expensive. The Propaganda might, in this regard, give us great help, by sending us a printing press, sufficiently complete to print books in English and French. We have an excellent Catholic here in the profession, who offers to put up the establishment. I conjure Your Eminence, to interest yourself in this project. It is the most efficacious and, perhaps, the least expensive means, by which the Congregation could assist us. Mr. De Andreis writes on this subject to the Ven. Mr. Colucci, asking him to act as solicitor in our behalf with Your Eminence. It is important that nothing be forgotten, and that the person Your Eminence may charge with this commission, keep in mind that the French (language) has some accentuated characters, and that the English has some characters not used in Italian, for example as k, w, x, y.

In the midst of these my concerns of a hopeful nature, I have also my burning vexations. One of the most poignant is the defection of a young subdeacon, Valentin by name, an Alsatian by birth, who, having been tormented by temptations, that at times affected his brain,

² This was Father Charles De la Croix who, at that time, was manager of the Bishop's Farm, near Florissant, and in February 1819 made a missionary trip to Cote Sans Dessein, and penetrated as far as New Franklin or Boon's Lick (opposite the present town of Boonville, Mo.). In December Father De la Croix made a second trip to the mouth of the Gasconade River, where there were French settlements at Gasconade and Loutre Island. Cf. the article "Father Charles De la Croix" in *Pastoral-Blatt*, July 1919.

declared to me that he cannot hold out any longer. He has left the Seminary, thinks of entering on a commercial career, and asks me to dispense him from the breviary, whilst awaiting the dispensation from continence. I have referred him for both to the decision of the Holy See, promising him to ask for the dispensations on condition that he remove from my diocese to parts where he is unknown. Really, Your Eminence, this poor young man is worthy of compassion. He will surely lose his head, after having given veritable scandals, which are a thousand times more injurious here, than they would be in Europe. I supplicate Your Eminence, to decide this double question in all the fullness of Your mercy.

The animosity in New Orleans seems to be abating. Although a certain distrust continues in the mind of Father Anthony de Sedella, which leads him to oppose me. I am making an effort to take from him those two vicious subjects, his vicars, who for the last twelve years have been the scandal of the city. The trustees who were opposed to me, have to-day requested me to send two good priests to their parish and to suspend, at least, one of those two miserable men. If Father Anthony did not support them, the matter could be arranged. I need patience and wisdom in every trial. May God grant them both.

I learn with much sorrow of the movements brought about in New York, Philadelphia and Charleston by the Irish party, who determined Mr. De Barth to decline the episcopacy.³ I would venture to suggest a middle-course, i. e. to nominate neither a Frenchman, nor an Irishman, but an American. Rev. Mr. Fenwick, aged about 36 years, a man of great talent for preaching, and a very pronounced character, would be the only possible candidate.⁴ There is but one obstacle, that he is a Jesuit, but the Holy See can easily remove it. Your Eminence will, no doubt, understand that, although not charged with these affairs, I am nevertheless obliged as a bishop, to make known to you my opinion. The Episcopacy has a solidarity of interests: In general, I can assure you, that there is little to boast in the Irish priests that come to America. You hear but little of these save the reports of scandal given by their excesses. I venture to predict that if Mr. Ha.⁵ should prevail, the spirit of religion in Philadelphia would be undone. His striving after the episcopacy is certainly not in his favor. Nominate, Your Eminence, pious men who tremble at the prospect of a similar burden, and do not allow yourself to be seduced by the vain reputations

³ Rev. Louis Walbach De Barth, being Administrator, was appointed Bishop of Philadelphia in 1818, but he positively and persistently refused the appointment. There is probably no foundation to Bishop Du Bourg's charge that the "Irish party" had been antagonistic to Father De Barth's selection for Philadelphia. Cf. the strong words of Father De Barth in his letter to Archbishop Marechal quoted by J. G. Shea, *History of Catholic Church in the United States*, Vol. III, p. 222.

⁴ Father Benedict Fenwick, afterwards second Bishop of Boston.

⁵ The celebrated Dominican William V. Harold, specially favored by Bishop Connolly of New York, was Pastor of St. Mary's Cathedral in Philadelphia.

of beautiful Preachers.⁶ Those men of beautiful phrases absolutely ruin all piety in their own hearts. Pardon me once more. These are effusions which I pour fourth into the bosom of Your Eminence alone. I have good reason to expect that there moves around you a secret party, which is all the more dangerous, because it is hidden. I have no other interest in saying this, than that of religion. Your Eminence knows my sentiments. They are and will always be those of unlimited attachment to the glory and honor of the Apostolic See and of a most respectful filial affection toward the sacred person of Your Eminence.

✦ Louis William, Bishop of Louisiana.

XII

BISHOP DU BOURG TO CARDINAL LITTA,

*Prefect of Propaganda.*¹

St. Louis, 12 Maii 1819.

Eminentissime Praeses.

Paucos infra menses Emam. Vestram per literas adii, docens de statu meae Dioeceseos, et praesertim de spe quae mihi tandem affulgere ceperat, fore ut infausta dissidia, quae Novae Aureliae Ecclesiam, totius regionis primariam, jam pridem distrahebant, brevi componerentur. Tanti operis promovendi et accelerandi causa, supplicabam ut Pater Antonius de Sedella ad Episcopalem dignitatem cum titulo in partibus, in adjutorium meum, *tacito tamen jure successionis*, institueretur. Hinc enim eventurum judicabam, ut alienatae oves ad obedientiam et amorem sui Pastoris facilius reducerentur, et ut omnes sensim in unam mentem coalescerent.

Ex datis posterioribus notitiis, felicius in dies profecit pacificationis negotium. Cum enim P. Antonius administratores temporales suae Ecclesiae, mihi antea infensissimos, agente imprimis familiarissimo meo Revdo. Dno. Martial, jam multum in meas partes propendere animadverteret, ipse epistolam ad me direxit submissionis et reverentiae plenam, sed et totum exinde se exhibuit in corrigendis abusibus, contra quos pluries frustra reclamaveram. Inter istos primum locum tenebat effrenata unius ex ejus Vicariis morum depravitas, quae morigeratis dolori, infirmis scandalo, impiis dudum ludibrio fuerat. Hunc ab altaris ministerio, quatuor abhinc annis, arcere tentaveram; sed suffragantibus ipsi, quotquot Antonianae factioni favebant, satius putavi scandalum tolerare, quam infando schismati viam sternere.

⁶ "Beautiful Preachers, beaux prédicateurs," a play of words. Father Harold belonging to the Order of Preachers, and at the same time being a distinguished preacher of commanding presence, like his contemporary, the unfortunate William Hogan. In the literature of the day William Harold is usually called the younger Harold, to distinguish him from his uncle Father James Harold, also a Dominican.

¹ Archiv. S. C. de Prop. Fide. Scritture Referite nei Congressi. America Centrale. Dal Canada all'Istmo di Panama. Codice No. 4. Dal 1818 atto, il 1820.

Accepta igitur nuper dicta Patris Antonii professione, Decretum suspensionis contra Vicarium ipsi remisi, cui tum ipse, tum administratores nedum illico obtemperaverunt, sed et efficacius egerunt, ut quam primum tres ex optimis meis consacerdotibus in vicarios suae ecclesiae eligerem, quod et feci; imo unum ex his Revdum. Dum. Jphum Moni, Bolonensem, suavissimi ingenii et verae sacerdotalis modestiae virum, qui dum Vicarii Generalis vices Novae Aureliae ad tempus ageret, Patris Antonii mentem sibi penitus devinxerat, ipsius coadjutorem, cum jure successionis, constitui. Ita demum stabilitatis, ut puto, illius ecclesiae pace et bono regimine, jam nihil obstare censeo, quominus P. Antonio in testimonium approbationis, et ad eum novo quodam vinculo obfirmandum, pontificales infulae deferantur. Quin imo, cum post tam diuturnam Sedis Vacationem, post tam deploranda jurgia, post tot convitia in actualem praesulem, ipsamque Romanam Sedem acta, cives incolae non solum jam Episcopi necessitatem non sentiunt, set etiam a recipiendo quovis Antistite alienos etiam se exhibeant, nullus mihi aptior videtur ipso Patre Antonio ad hominum animos Episcopali dignitati et Summi Pontificis auctoritati denuo conciliandos et sensim assuefaciendos. Strata nimirum ab ipso via, prudens quivis, post ejus obitum, facili negotio ipsius locum inire poterit. Rogo igitur delegationem atque iterum, ut nisi aliter Emae. Vae. et Sacrae Congregationi visum fuerit, Breve electionis in titulum *in partibus* ipsi quamprimum *via Livorni, duplicatum* expediatur, adjectis sequentibus — 1° Ut *mihi*, vel me deficiente aut annuente, Revmo. Bardensi Antistiti, aut ejus Coadjutori, consecrationis ejus munus demandetur. 2° Ut ab uno duntaxat Episcopo, assistantibus duobus sacerdotibus, possit perfici. 3° Ut nullam jurisdictionem in ista Dioecesi, nisi ex Ordinarii delegatione, valeat exercere. 4° Ut ad me dirigatur expeditio, cum hoc supra scripto: "To the Right Revd. L. Wm. Du Bourg, Bishop of Louisiana, to the care of Mr. P. F. Du Bourg, New Orleans" et Dno. Antonio Filicchi, Livornensi mercatori specialiter transmittenda, commendetur.

Hac profecto via schismatis periculo efficaciter occursum erit, at nondum satis Dioeceseos utilitati, sive praesenti, sive futurae, provisum. Nolo enim Eminentiam Vestram oblivisci, 1° Dioecesim hanc omnium in America Septentrionali praecipuam esse, tum notissima sua extensione, qua ad trium millium millia, ut nimirum, in longitudinem decurrit, tum multitudine Catholicorum, qui longe majorem incolarum numerum constituunt. 2° Religionis statum in ea, ob longam Episcopalis successionem interruptam, sacerdotum inopiam, et quod pejus est, plurimorum prava exempla variasque alias locales causas, summopere prostratum. Extensio facit ut, propter ingruentes jam infirmitates, non possim, sine maximo salutis meae detrimento, vitaeque periculo, remotiores partes adire; et ideo Fideles innumeri sacra unctione, sacerdotes Episcopali vigilantia, et consilio priventur, veteres abusus subsistant, novique in dies invisi gliscant. — Et si qua spes melioris aevi succedere jam coepit, cum vix e ruinis opus reformationis assurgat, solo iterum indubitanter aequabitur, si vel per aliquot menses Episcopalis sollicitudinis vacet exercitium.

Neutri medebitur Patris Antonii promotio, neque enim, ob provectissimam aetatem, extra civitatis ambitum excurrere, neque ob defectum scientiae, praeteritorumque recordationem, Dioeceseos administrationi prorsus par esset. Expediendi igitur, meo quidem iudicio, foret, ut, *prater eum*, alius mihi in verum *Coadjutorem*, cum *jure* successionis, adjungeretur, qui virtutibus, scientia, mentisque ac corporis vigore pollens, tum imbecillitati meae supplere, tum me intempestive sublato, gubernium statim arripere valeret. Vereor equidem ne Sacrae illi Congregationi exorbitans videatur ista mea supplicatio, quippe cum rarissima forsitan, si qua unquam fuerint, exempla duorum Episcoporum titularium, in unius Ordinarii juvamen, institutorum. — At Eminentissimos Patres considerare velim extraordinariis malis extraordinaria remedia applicari solere. — Et profecto si aliquando Episcopalis dignitas, sine ulla directa Ecclesiae utilitate, bene meritis sacerdotibus, ad preces Principum saecularium, ut pluries fit, defertur, potiori certe titulo, ad suscitandam confirmandamque in vastissimo tractu labefactam penesque emortuam Religionem concedendam videri. Ceterum fiducialius cum Sacra Congregatione agens, dico quod expedire sentio; Ipsa, quod liceat, judicet. Quod si in sententiam meam descendere dignabitur, Nullus dignior appareret, cui sacra illa dignitas conferatur, quam Revdus. Dnus. Josephus Rosati, Neapolitanus, Congregationis Missionis sacerdos ornatissimus, triginta circiter annos natus. Huic enim nihil omnino deest, quo sibi reverentiam amoremque omnium conciliet; virtus in eo, prudentia praesertim supra aetatem, copiosa doctrina, flagrans animarum studium, summa eloquii fecunditas, modestia singularis, veneranda vultus gravitas, robur corporis indefessum.

Verum cum propter summam sui diffidentiam, timendum sit, ne prolatum honorem rejiciat, puto modestiae ipsius vim esse inferendam, praeceptumque dignationi adjungendum, et omnis periculosae procrastinationi locus confestim tollatur.

Eminentiam Vestram precor, ut me, meumque gregem ad pedes Sanctissimi, amantissimique Patris Nostri iterum ponat, et pro utroque Apostolicam benedictionem imploret, dum ego amplexu sacrae purpureae, cum summa veneratione, et tenerrimo cordis affectu me profiteor &c.

✠ L. Guil. Du Bourg, Episc.

Ludov. in Amer. Septi.

Ex Oppido Sti. Ludovici
Missouriani agri
in foederatis America Statibus
die Maii 12a. 1819.

TRANSLATION.

St. Louis, May 12, 1819.

Most Eminent Prefect,

A few months ago I approached Your Eminence by letter, giving an account of the state of my Diocese, and especially concerning the hope which had at last begun to cheer me, that the unhappy dissen-

sions which have so long convulsed the Church of New Orleans, the principal church of this entire region, would shortly be composed. In order to promote and hasten such a great work, I requested Father Anthony de Sedella be elevated to the episcopal dignity with the title *in partibus*, as my assistant, suppressing, however, the right of succession. Through this I judged that the estranged sheep might be more easily brought back to the obedience and love of their Shepherd, and that all might gradually coalesce in one mind.

According to subsequent communications the work of pacification progresses more happily from day to day. For when Father Anthony noticed that the trustees of his church, formerly most inimical to me, were now, through the influence mainly of my very dear friend, the Reverend Mr. Martial, greatly inclined to my side, he sent me a letter, full of submissiveness and reverence, and after that showed himself intent in correcting the abuses against which I had frequently protested in vain. The first among these was the unbridled moral depravity of one of his Vicars, which had so long been the cause of sorrow to the virtuous, of scandal to the weak, and of derision to the impious. Four years since I had attempted to remove him from the service at the altar, but as he was supported by all those that favored the faction of Anthony (de Sedella), I considered it preferable to tolerate the scandal than to prepare the way for a deplorable schism.

Having, therefore, received the above-mentioned profession of Father Anthony, I sent him the decree of suspension of his vicar, and he, as well as the trustees, yielded immediate obedience, and also most earnestly requested that I appoint, as soon as possible, three of my best priests as vicars of his church, which I did: I even constituted one of them, the Reverend Mr. Joseph Moni, of Bologna, a man of lovable character and truly sacerdotal discretion, who whilst holding for a time the place of Vicar General of New Orleans, had completely captivated the mind of Father Anthony, as his assistant with the right of succession. The peace and government of that church being thus established, I think there is nothing to prevent you offering the mitre to Father Anthony as a sign of approbation and a means of confirming him with a new bond of union. Moreover, as after such a long vacancy, after such deplorable quarrels, after so many denunciations directed against their actual bishop and even against the Roman See, the inhabitants not only do not feel the need of a bishop, but even show themselves disinclined to receiving any bishop, no one appears to me more suitable, than the Father Anthony to conciliate and gradually accustom the minds of men to the episcopal dignity and the authority of the Sovereign Pontiff. The way being thus paved by him, any prudent man will, after his death, with little trouble take his place. I therefore ask you again and again that, unless it seem otherwise to Your Eminence and the Sacred Congregation, the Brief of his election as bishop *in partibus*, be sent in duplicate, as soon as possible, via Leghorn, with the following directions: (1) That the office of consecrating him be granted to me, or in case I should decline and suggest another (consecrator), to the Right Reverend Bishop of Bardstown or

to his Coadjutor. (2) That it may be performed by one bishop, with two assistant priests. (3) And that he cannot exercise any jurisdiction in that diocese, except by delegation from his ordinary. (4) That the brief of appointment be directed to me with this address: To the Right Reverend L. W. Du Bourg, Bishop of Louisiana, to the care of Mr. P. F. Du Bourg, New Orleans; and that it be delivered to Mr. Antonio Filicchi, Merchant at Leghorn, to be faithfully transmitted to us.

In this manner the danger of schism will be effectively met, yet the needs of the diocese, both present and future, will not yet be sufficiently provided for. I would not have Your Eminence forget: 1) that this diocese is the most important one of all North America, not only on account of its well-known extension, running, as it does three thousand miles in length, but also on account of the multitude of Catholics, who compose by far the greater number of inhabitants; 2) that the religious condition has greatly deteriorated through the long interruption of the episcopal succession, the paucity of priests, and what is even worse, the bad example of many, and other local circumstances. Its extension brings it about that, with my increasing infirmities, I cannot without greatest detriment to my salvation, and danger to my life, visit the more remote parts of my diocese. And therefore a great number of the faithful are deprived of Confirmation, the priests lack the supervision and counsel of their bishop; the old abuses continue, and new ones spring up every day. And if the hope of a coming better age has already risen, and as the work of reform is just beginning, it will certainly be levelled to the ground once more, if the exercise of episcopal solicitude should cease for a few months.

Neither of these will be remedied by the promotion of Father Anthony; for he would neither, on account of his advanced age, be able to go out beyond the limits of the city, nor would he, on account of his deficiency of learning, and the sad memories of the past, be able to administer the diocese. It would, therefore, be expedient in my judgment that, besides him, another be given me as a real coadjutor, with the right of succession, who being endowed with virtue, learning, and vigor of mind and body, might be capable, not only of assisting my weakness, but also of seizing the reins of government in case I should be prematurely taken away. I fear, indeed, that my supplication may seem exorbitant to the Sacred Congregation, as the case of two titular bishops being given to help one ordinary, if there be any at all, must be very rare indeed. But I would ask the Most Eminent Fathers to consider that to extraordinary evils extraordinary remedies are usually applied.

Indeed, if at times the episcopal dignity is conferred upon well-deserving priests, without any direct advantage to the Church, simply at the request of secular princes, as it frequently happens, it certainly seems to be granted with greater propriety, in order to raise up and confirm religion, wasted and almost dead, in a vast territory. However, acting confidentially with the Sacred Congregation, I say what I feel would be expedient. The Congregation may judge what is

permitted. If it should accept my judgment, no one would appear more worthy to receive this sacred dignity, than the Reverend D. Josephus Rosati, a Neapolitan, a most distinguished priest of the Congregation of the Missions, about thirty years of age. He is wanting in nothing that would enable him to gain the reverence and the love of all: Virtue, especially prudence beyond his age, copious learning, a burning zeal for souls, resourceful eloquence, singular modesty, a venerable gravity of appearance, and an untiring strength of body. But as it is to be feared that he might, through his great lack of confidence in himself, refuse the proffered honor, I believe that force should be applied to his modesty and the command should be added to the appointment, so that all occasions for dangerous procrastination might be removed. I beg Your Eminence that you place me and my flock at the feet of Our most Holy and most Loving Father, and ask for both the Apostolic Benediction, whilst I, embracing the Sacred Purple, profess myself to be with the greatest veneration and the most tender affection of heart etc.

✠ L. Guil. Du Bourg, Episc.
Ludov. in Amer. Septi.

Ex Oppido Sti. Ludovici
Missouriani agri
in foederatis America Statibus
die Maii 12a. 1819.



ST. JOHN'S SEMINARY



3 8151 001 18602 9

ST. JOHN'S SEMINARY LIBRARY
BRIGHTON, MASS.

The cooperation of borrowers is requested
in the matter of careful handling of the books
and in their prompt return.

Books may be kept for two weeks and may
be renewed, unless reserved.

If you cannot find what you want, ask the
Librarian who will be glad to help you

Further loaning of books, without notifica-
tion of the Librarian, is not permitted.

Accession
Number

Shelf
Number

